THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAGA

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA No.1 FOR SATURN

ISSUE 15 £3.99
JANUARY 1997



SONIC 3D

Sega Superstar Blasts onto Saturn!

FIGHTERS MEGAMIX

First Playtest of Awesome New AM2 Fighting Game!

NO CD? DEMAND SATISFACTION FROM YOUR NEWSAGENT IMMEDIATELY!
WE REGRET THAT THE CD PROMOTION IS NOT AVAILABLE
TO READERS OUTSIDE THE UK

PLUS! BUG TOO VIRTUAL ON BATMAN FOREVER DOOM LAST BRONX KRAZY IVAN TEMPEST 2000 COMMAND AND CONQUER DIE HARD TRILOGY CHRISTMAS NIGHTS


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ON THE CD...



Once again, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE provides the very best in cover-mounted demo CDs. Whilst other magazines for other systems provide monthly CDs regardless of game quality, we prefer to produce less discs but with far superior games. Just as we have done this month.
SEGA FLASH VOLUME #3, to give the disc its full name, is a truly exceptional piece of demonstration engineering, guaranteeing satisfaction to all who load it up. But what do we have for you? Read on...





PLAYABLE LEVELS!

VIRTUAL ON!

It's a robot battling game! It's got amazing 3D graphics! It has deep and extremely involving gameplay! It scores 93% in this very issue!
Virtual On is one of the games where you really don't know what's going on to begin with, which makes this demo so great, because you can play it and play it until you've sussed the game's incredible battling mechanics (or you could read the showcase starting on page 44). In a word: incredible!
WHAT YOU GET: Play against the first robot on hard difficulty level with any of the robots. Watch the amazing intro too!

TOMB RAIDER

Lara Croft's debut adventure only just happens to be the very greatest piece of work ever to issue forth from the labs of Core Design. And you get to play a portion of this epic game! Bear witness to the full 3D movement of this most stunning of games. Check out the sheer detail on every single part of the landscape - it's ace. Also, learn to control the immensely talented Lara and battle wolves and suchlike. Another Saturn winner!
WHAT YOU GET: An entire level from the finished game, with all features included. It's a visual feast!









DAYTONA CCE

Daytona CCE ISN'T Daytona Remix. It's a different take on the classic arcade game this time put together by the CS Team - the people responsible for the best-selling Saturn translation of Sega Rally. In this demo you get to see what all of the fuss is about with a full, single track to get your teeth into. Remember in the full game you get seven more cars and four more tracks - this is only a fraction of what's on offer!
WHAT YOU GET: Play a full four-lap race on the legendary Dinosaur Canyon track in the Hornet car! Prepare yourself for the power!

SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97

Although this has been on the shelves for quite a while now, Sega are still keen for as many people as possible to sample this piece of footballing excellence. Hence its return visit to our demo disc! The most amazing football simulation ever, Sega Worldwide Soccer outshines every similar effort on every other system and is truly one of the most essential titles in the Sega Saturn library of games!
WHAT YOU GET: Playable half of just one game, with limited teams on offer. The full game's commentary is missing too.











PLUS FULL-MOTION VIDEO OF:

BUG TOO! FIGHTING VIPERS!! VIRTUA COP 2!!! NiGHTS!!!! DARK SAVIOR!!!!! MR BONES!!!!!!

WARNING: After the demo CD went to press it became apparent that there is a bug with this software. Apparently, if left alone for around three hours, the Saturn will crash. Just reset the machine and everything should be fine - there's no danger to your Saturn or its internal memory.

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Competition rules
EMAP Images and Sega staff and their families are prohibited from entering any Sega Saturn magazine competition. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

We regret that due to limited staff and time we cannot answer tips enquiries by telephone. Apologies.

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE USE DOLBY SURROUND TO TEST ALL SOFTWARE

COVER STORY



COMING SOON





COIN -OPERATED

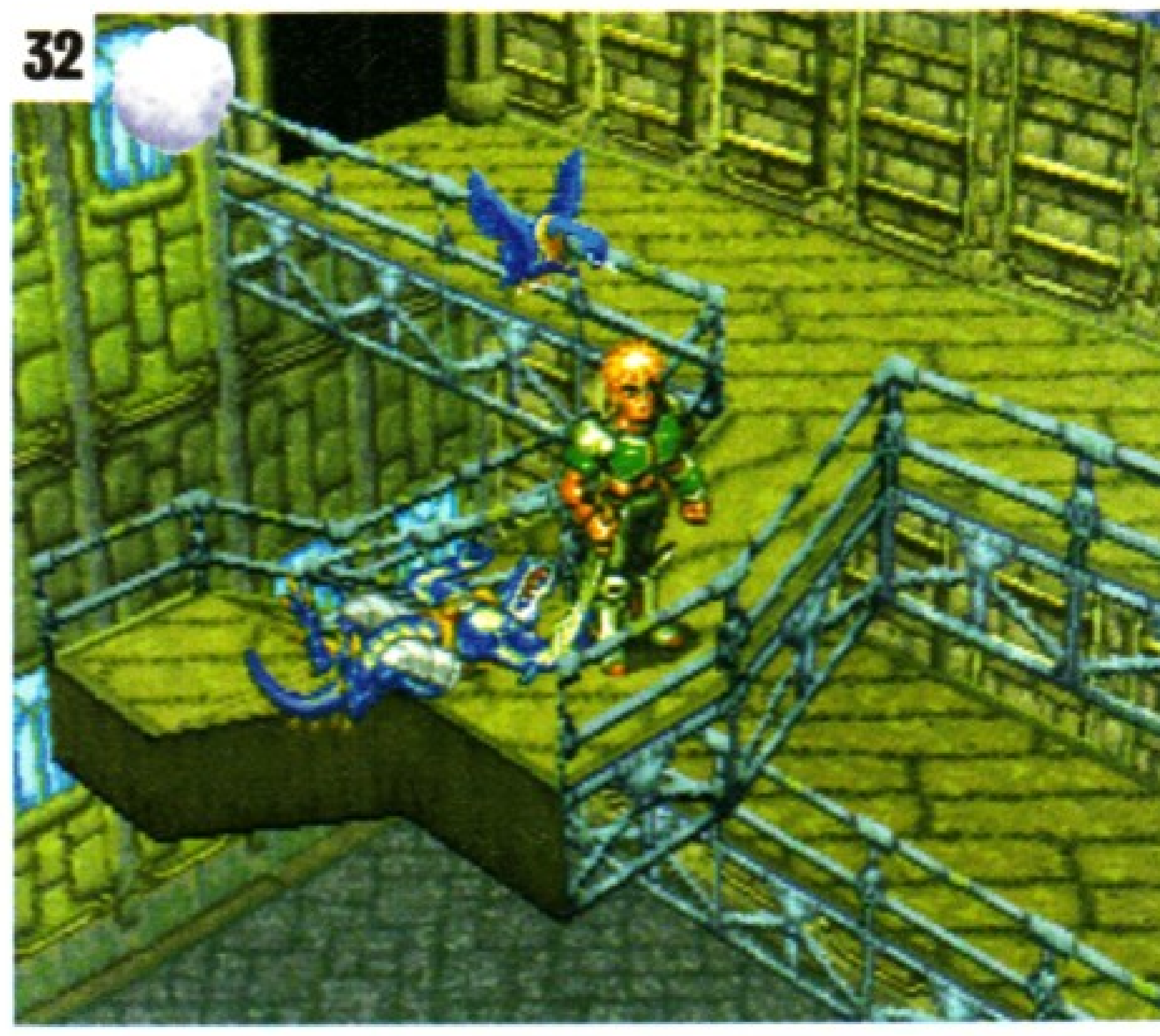
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PLUS!

SUBSCRIBE AND GET CHRISTMAS NiGHTS FREE! TURN TO PAGE 64 RIGHT THIS MINUTE!

NEWS

Welcome to the latest edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. It's been what you might call a trying month this issue with Dave and I being the only full-time staff on the magazine (and him disappearing for a week to do the awesome CVG History of Videogames), but we've still managed to produce some great stuff. As well as getting the first look at Fighters MegaMix, we've got stunning news about VF3, Last Bronx and of course X-Men versus Street Fighter. I do heartily recommend Virtual On and Command and Conquer - two games that you should go out and purchase right now. I've also finally "got into" Tomb Raider as well - a Saturn game you MUST own. Oddly enough, two of the three games I've just mentioned can be found on our spectacular demo disc - which everyone gets to sample this time. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE: the best Saturn mag out there. Bar none.

Shoryuken!
Richard Leadbetter, Editor.



CAPCOM'S LATEST EXCL





Capcom teamed up with Sega to give the most exciting press launch of the year. Not only was Fighters MegaMix revealed with VF3 and Last Bronx announced for conversion to Saturn, but Capcom also stepped into the ring to reveal that X-Men Versus Street Fighter is a SATURN EXCLUSIVE!

At the now legendary Power-Up press conference on November 6, Junichi Nagai, team manager of the Capcom marketing group announced their intention to bring their latest 2D fighting game to Saturn only.

If you missed the Coin-Operated report a couple of issues ago in SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, we've seen fit to print a load of arcade shots (expect a near-identical look for the Saturn game) and basically fill you in a bit about what the game's about.

Basically speaking, X-Men Versus Street Fighter is like a cross between Marvel Super Heroes and Street Fighter Alpha 2, combining elements of both.

The emphasis is far more on action though, as opposed to the technical nature of SFA2. The speed of the game is far faster than Alpha, with moves being much easier to pull off. Special moves are also far more spectacular, with some enormous sprites on screen which clearly the PlayStation can't handle (check out the no-show of X-Men (apparently canned for good) and the lacklustre DarkStalkers conversion).

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Marvel arch-villain Apocalypse lives by one adage: that only the fittest must survive. Having been around for over a thousand years, he's convinced that the rise of the mutants will continue unchecked with the weak humans eventually overwhelmed by the evolution of the mutant gene. However, the antics of the Street Fighters has caught his attention. Can these mere humans really match up to the superhuman powers of the genetic mutant X-factor? He kidnaps a bunch of Street Fighters and X-Men and decides to carry out some painful research on them.

Putting aside all of their differences, mutants and Street Fighters come together to take down Apocalypse. Releasing that a one-on-one battle with Apocalypse is near-suicidal, the characters team up into pairs and go into battle - for some reason, against each other!

THE TEAM STRUCTURE

The best thing about X-Men Versus Street Fighter is undoubtedly the fact that you actually have control over TWO characters. On the character select screen, two fighters can be chosen (from eight X-characters or nine SFers). Into the game and the three-round match system has been scrapped. Basically the match is now over when both of your characters have been defeated. Switch between them by using the heavy punch and kick buttons simultaneously. It's as simple as that really.

SUPER-TEAM ATTACK MOVES!

Performing Super Moves (or X-Attacks) is pretty much like X-Men: Children of the Atom. Mostly it comes down to a fireball motion with all three punch buttons.



Ryu's Super now looks incredible! All the Street Fighters' moves look better here.



Chun Li despatches Zangief in true style. Note the Alpha-style Super Combo finish explosion.



X-Men Versus Street Fighter features sprites so large, even the Saturn's going to be pushed to display them. But it will, have no doubt. Have Capcom disappointed us yet? Answer: in a word, no.



USIVE TO SATURN!









However, in X-Men Versus Street Fighter, it's possible to have both characters use their Supers at once! This results in some of the most wanton carnage you've ever witnessed in a 2D fighting game!

When characters with outrageous-looking attacks get together, the screen is packed with enormous sprites. For example, a Cyclops/Ryu combination produces two absolutely huge laser-style attacks that take up the entire screen.

Another addition are the Team Counters. Similar to the Alpha Counters in Street Fighter Alpha, these are different in that whilst your main character blocks, your second comes on and performs the counter. Superlative stuff.

NEW CHARACTERS TOO

As you can see from the screenshots, X-Men Versus Street Fighter features some new characters to get to grips with. Finally, Capcom have included three of the X-Men's most popular characters in the roster. Gambit, master athlete and capable od empowering objects with kinetic energy is in along with the love of his life, Rogue. She's super-strong, can fly, and can absorb the powers and memories of others. Basically this means that she can steal fireball attacks (and Ken's flaming Dragon Punch!). Notable X-Villain Sabretooth has also been included. He plays similarly to the Hulk in Marvel Super Heroes, but he's a lot, lot faster. And meaner. In the Street Fighter department there's nothing new, although Cammy finally returns (and she's in the thrall of Bison).



Wolverine and Cyclops team up to produce their Team Super Move (above) – it's bloody spectacular, understand? Ken's Flaming Dragon Punch looks ace (below).





BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SATURN GAME?

Obviously this game is going to be difficult to convert. Why? Well, Capcom have had problems getting all the animation for two characters in memory at once. With X-Men Versus Street Fighter, this is doubled since there are twice as many fighters in memory at once.

We can only think that this is the game that Capcom finally use a memory card for, similar to what SNK have done with King of Fighters '95 and Fatal Fury Real Bout. Capcom have said in the past that they will use the system, but it's yet to be confirmed if this is the game that will do it. Hopefully we'll have some firm answers soon.

THE TOYS 'R US DEBACLE

First of all, many apologies about the Bundles of Joy feature last month. Despite us getting information directly from the head offices of the companies featured, an error crept in that has deluged SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's offices with 'phone calls. Just for the record, the Toys 'R Us deal for the Saturn (approximately £198 for a machine plus three games) was incorrect. Apparently the correct price is around £247. Obviously we feel a bit stupid because we recommended Toys 'R Us and it turns out that their pack is pretty underwhelming. In which case, we recommend checking out Comet or Dixons. Look for a three-game pack including the Saturn, Sega Rally and Virtua Fighter 2 (plus another) for around £250.

Once again though, many apologies to everyone who acted on the duff information and indeed sorry to Toys 'R Us. Information along these lines will be double-checked in future.

SNK STRIKE BACK

SNK are just about ready to unleash their latest Saturn CD/Cart combination game in Japan. And it is... King of Fighters '96! We've gone on about KoF before but basically this is the most technically sound fighting game series about – even eclipsing Street Fighter Alpha 2! It gets slagged off in the UK press mostly by people who can't play it properly.

KING OF FIGHTERS RELEASE?

On a similar theme it would appear that King of Fighters '95 is finally going to get a UK release – finally. Hopefully the game should be pretty cheap too, even though the CD/Cart system has been retained for the UK game. Expect KoF to finally be released in the first quarter of 1997.

MORE CORE

Core Design are currently on a high after the incredible success of Tomb Raider (which perhaps we under-rated at 92% – it really is absolutely AMAZING). The next project due from the Derby-based company is a 3D polygonised Streets of Rage style game. In fact, Core approached Sega to actually use Streets of Rage characters, but since the game is also appearing on PlayStation that particular deal fell through. It's also been revealed that a sequel to Tomb Raider is also currently in the planning stages.

MARVEL-OUS

Capcom still seem intent on releasing Marvel Super Heroes for the Saturn. And more power to them for doing so, because the arcade machine was BRILLIANT. A first quarter 1997 release, perhaps?



POLICE HUNT TATTOOED MANIAC
POLICE YESTERDAY LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE HUNT FOR A MAN THEY DESCRIBED AS 'HIGHLY DANGEROUS'.
The store manager said that the man had been playing Tekken 2 on PlayStation, when he suddenly stripped to the waist - revealing his all-over body tattoos - screamed "Heihachi will avenge" before setting about his trail of destruction.
The public have been warned not to approach him.
SOON MY MASTERPIECE WILL BE COMPLETE
THE MASTERPIECE WILL BE FINISHED
TEKKEN II HAS SHOWN THE WAY
Pain will bring me closer to the father
PAIN WILL BRING ME CLOSER TO FATHER
THE SUPER-HUMAN PISTON ATTACK HAS LEFT ME WEAK BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT - THE QUEST MUST CONTINUE
THE FIGHT GOES ON
Beware Kazuya
鉄拳
FEEL NO PAIN
TEKKEN II
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE!
the sins of the son will be visited
a medal for each victory
I AM THE DEVIL SON KAZUYA
DEVIL SON
HEIHACHI WILL RETURN
MY TROPHIES WILL SHOW MY COMRADES
A MEDAL FOR EACH VICTORY
thanks to my medals i'm more intense
NO, I'M MORE INTENSE
THE MARK OF THE PISTON
MY BRAVERY WILL BE REWARDED
namco
SONY
PlayStation
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION









VIRTUA FIGHTER 3 FINALLY CONFIRMED!

At the major Japanese press conference which revealed Fighters MegaMix to the world for the first time, Yu Suzuki also announced that Virtua Fighter 3 would CERTAINLY be appearing on Sega Saturn.

Mr Suzuki, AM2's distinguished leader told the Japanese press that AM2 Research had been studying the Model 3 hardware and VF3 program for the last few months to determine whether it's even possible to bring the game to the Saturn in any way, shape or form.

Speaking at the Power Up press conference, he said "The question was, 'can we actually do it?'. But after the results attained from studying the matter for three months we have concluded that technically the possibility is there. Department AM2 and I have the responsibility of making this possible, so please expect the best."

Mr Suzuki's announcements were vague enough to bring out a huge swell of speculation as to how the Saturn would be able to cope with the power of Virtua Fighter 3. Special effects aside, the game has walls like Fighting Vipers, plus different levels of terrain which has huge implications on both the look and the gameplay.

The good money is still on some kind of 3D accelerator chip being introduced in a cartridge and bearing in mind that awesome spec four-megabyte RAM 3D boards are available for PC at around $129 in the states, it's clear that some kind of cart would be pretty easy to mass-produce (and thus boost the Saturn's performance way ahead of PlayStation and even N64).

But this is all speculation on the part of super-excited journalists. Expect concrete detailage over the next few months...

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY AM2 SATURN GAME?

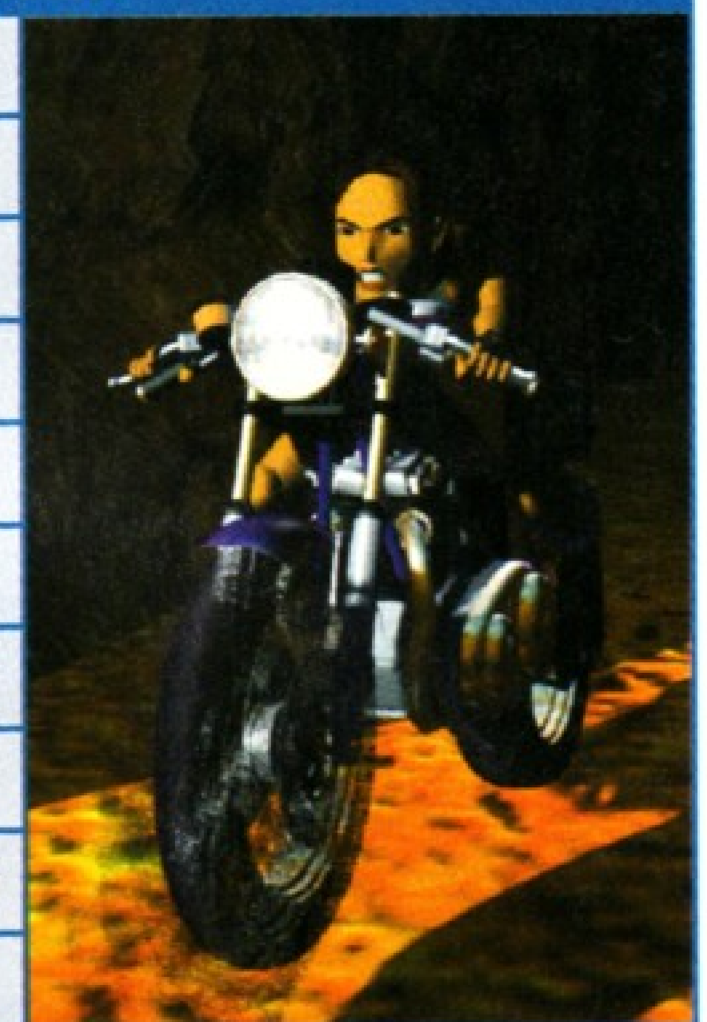
Fighters MegaMix we all know about, but Yu Suzuki has also announced the existence of another AM2 project exclusive to Sega Saturn. Just what is it, exactly? Mr Suzuki isn't letting on, saying only that "it will be as surprising as Fighters MegaMix". Some new usage for the Virtua Cop engine is the most likely candidate at this time, but AM2 are keeping their cards close to their chest. The only other piece of information revealed at this time is the Japanese release date of "this season", with some Japanese magazines believing that the game will be out THIS YEAR!

Hopefully the mystery will have been cleared up by the time the next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE hits the stands.

BLOCKBUSTER CHARTS

TOP TEN VIDEO GAMES

1	TOMB RAIDER ➡
2	WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97
3	ALIEN TRILOGY
4	EXHUMED
5	DESTRUCTION DERBY
6	NIGHTS
7	WIPEOUT
8	TITAN WARS
9	ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3
10	SEGA RALLY



TOP TEN RENTAL VIDEOS

1	EXECUTIVE DECISION
2	MONEY TRAIN
3	TWELVE MONKEYS ➡
4	BROKEN ARROW
5	BIRDCAGE
6	PRIMAL FEAR
7	TRAINSPOTTING
8	GET SHORTY
9	JUMANJI
10	HEAT



TOP TEN RETAIL VIDEOS

1	TOY STORY ➡
2	BABE
3	TRAINSPOTTING
4	SENSE AND SENSIBILITY
5	JUMANJI
6	MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND
7	THE SANTA CLAUSE
8	X-FILES 6-MASTERPLAN
9	BRAVEHEART
10	ACE VENTURA 2



BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO

HMV CHARTS

Week ending November 29th

Send us your top ten games and you could be mentioned in this small but significant space next month! You also get a game for your trouble! How lovely! Send 'em to READER CHARTS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. Tom Nash of Heanor is this month's winner.

	HMV CHARTS		SATURN MAGAZINE CHARTS		READER CHARTS
1	Daytona USA CCE	1	Fighters MegaMix	1	NiGHTS
2	Worldwide Soccer '97	2	Tomb Raider	2	Guardian Heroes
3	Tomb Raider	3	Christmas NiGHTS	3	Tomb Raider
4	Fighting Vipers	4	Virtual On	4	Street Racer
5	Night Warriors	5	Virtua Fighter 2	5	Athlete Kings
6	Madden NFL '97	6	Street Fighter Alpha 2	6	X-Men: Children of the Atom
7	Virtua Cop (game and gun)	7	Virtua Cop 2	7	Shining Wisdom
8	NiGHTS	8	Rainbow Islands	8	Loaded
9	Bust-a-Move 2	9	Sonic 3D	9	Worms
10	Athlete Kings	10	Daytona CCE	10	Virtua Fighter 2

INTRODUCING... DRACULA DETECTIVE

A new game currently doing really well in Japan is Dracula Detective from the ASCII Corporation. The game is a 3D cinematic adventure game which uses the latest computer graphics technology to provide some awesome, involving visuals. ASCII drafted in Mr Hideki Sonoda (famed for his work on major Japanese TV animation series) to produce the plot and script, which is as much comedy as it is suspense.

The game basically involves you taking on the mantle of a Space-Time Detective who goes back to Germany 1939 to stop a scientist gone mad. He has taken refuge aboard a giant airship - the Lorelei - and you, accompanied by Lene Laval (the scientist's daughter) and your partner Iceman board the airship. Suddenly, Lene disappears and the airship changes direction. What's going on? Who knows?



Dracula Detective looks very interesting, but whether it will ever be translated into English is a mystery not even this detective is likely so solve in the short term!





IT'S TERRA FANTASTICA!

Sega Europe have announced an RPG which will go on sale sometime in 1997. Terra Phantastica is kind of like Shining Force in that it is a combat-styled adventure game. Deep on plot and combat, Terra Phantastica uses the grid system of combat to promote tactics and strategy. We haven't really played this one enough yet to get really fired up about it, but with games like this and Dark Savior on the way, it's clear that the Saturn is the machine of choice when it comes to adventure games.

SHAMELESS PROMOTION RIGHT HERE!

It's not often that SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE lowers itself to promoting our sister EMAP magazines (that's what house ads are for), but this time it's justified!

We highly recommend that you check out the latest edition of CVG (it has a lovely Christmas NiGHTS cover) which comes bundled with a brilliant, shiny 100 page book on the history of videogames! Written by Paul Glancey who just happens to be a major SSM contributor and designed by our very own Dave Kelsall, it really is brilliant. Maybe better than the mag (just joking!).

We wouldn't recommend this if it was anything less than the Masters' work, but not only is it brilliant, well-written and informative, it's also FREE (with the mag).

Go forth and purchase in confidence!



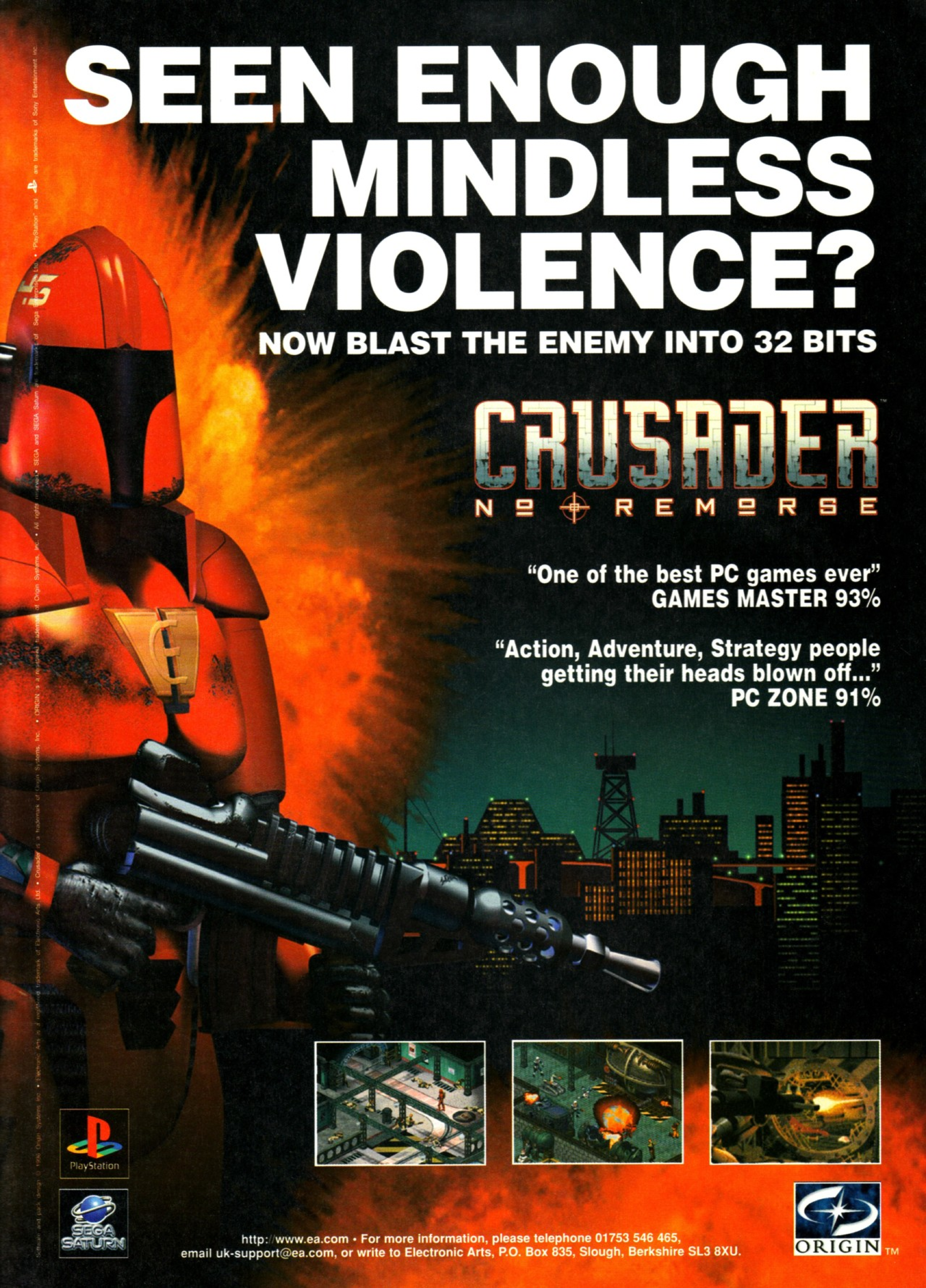
THE TECMO LIVE GAME SHOW!

In Japan, it's common for arcade manufacturers to stage their own events to promote their games. Capcom's Summer Festival is a brilliant annual event that showcases both home and arcade games. Well now Tecmo are getting in to the act as they ready their new coin-op releases.

Dead or Alive you might have heard about - it's a new arcade 3D fighting games noteworthy in that it uses Model 2 Sega technology and is planned for conversion onto Saturn in the future. Other Tecmo titles showcased included Gallop Racer (a 3D horse-racing game!) and Tecmo's Super Bowl.

The event itself was a great success, replete with competitions, game challenges, a chat show and a live concert. But best of all, gamers finally got the chance to get their mitts on Dead or Alive - a game which the Japanese press have been raving about for months!




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ORIGIN TM

AM3 UNLEASH BRONX CHEER

The 6th of November was a big day for Saturn fighting fans. Sega's AM2 and AM3 programming teams called a press conference in Japan to announce that they were working on Saturn conversions of two of the greatest arcade beat 'em ups of all time, Virtua Fighter 3 and Last Bronx, as well as an all-new Saturn fighting game, Fighters MegaMix, which combined characters from Fighting Vipers, Virtua Fighters and various 'guest stars' from other Virtua games. **You'll find more details on Fighters Megamix in the Coming Soon feature on page 14.**

A few days after the monumental conference, Mr Abe, AM3's development director who led the team responsible for the coin-op version of Last Bronx, spoke to the Japanese press about the Saturn conversion. He's confident of producing a near-perfect translation of the original.

Converting such a powerful arcade game to the Saturn presents quite a challenge even to the original arcade programmers, though. "Considering we're using ST-V technology, it's a first for us to create a game of this magnitude on such a technology," says Mr Abe.



THE ORIGINAL TEAM ARE DOING IT

But woah, woah, WOAH-HO-HO-HO! Was it wise to ask the arcade programmers to produce the Saturn conversion if they were so unfamiliar with the hardware? Mr Abe thinks they would be the only people in the world qualified to produce the spot-on conversion that Saturn players would demand. "When we were making the arcade version," he explains, "we wanted to push the Model 2 technology to its limits. An example was to animate even the smallest of things like the clothes on the characters and make the movement generally smoother. These are the difficult touches we wanted to achieve in the game, so you can imagine that if we didn't have the original team working on the home version we would be in trouble. Also, we didn't want the atmosphere to change in any way. If the original artist didn't do the graphics for the conversion, the graphics for the conversion the graphics would differ in some way and that's not what we want for the Saturn version. The characters in Last Bronx are very popular so if the feeling of the game changed in some way there would be hell to pay!"

CHARACTER TRANSLATIONS

How well will those characters translate to the Saturn? At the time of the interview Mr Abe's team were working on exactly that problem. "Obviously we can't port over the character data directly to the Saturn," Abe says, "so we're in the process of cutting down the number of polygons here and there so the characters can have more freedom to move slowly."

That's not going to be the only problem Abe's team will face, though. What about the famous mid-air 'Floater' combos that the game is famous for? Surely the collision-detection required for such moves would be a bugger to program? Mr Abe ruefully concurs. "Trying to get the collision detection perfect looks to be the hardest part of the development. Not being able to do the same floating combos as the arcade version would have ruined the conversion."

GAMEPLAY DIFFICULTIES

The 'attack cancels', that completely neutralise an opponent's moves, are also proving difficult to convert because there are so many possibilities that have to be catered for, but they too should be in the conversion. Likewise, the weapons, complete with after-images. "The reason we used the after-image," Mr Abe explains, "was because we found the weapons moved too fast and couldn't really be seen. For that reason we think it's very important that we put those in the conversion too."

It looks like Last Bronx will follow in the footsteps of other Sega arcade conversions, with all-new game modes exclusive to the Saturn conversion.

DON'T DO ANYTHING STRANGE!

At the moment, though, the team haven't decided what they might be. On the subject of new characters for the Saturn conversion, Mr Abe isn't too keen. "So many games have an original character, but with Last Bronx this is a problematic point. The game was designed to be quite realistic, with realistic style and people – Last Bronx characters wear clothes based on current Tokyo street fashions. So if we create an original character there's the possibility that it would destroy the style of the game. If players think this character doesn't fit the whole exercise would be meaningless. There must be a lot of players out there who think to themselves, 'Please don't do anything strange with the game!'."



AM2 released character movements demos of VF2 – now AM3 are doing it with Last Bronx.



Some more action shots showing Tommy's movements from Last Bronx.





Here you are, the official first Sega Saturn shots of Last Bronx. As you can read in the special report, Sega are sparing no expense with this game, drafting in the original coin-op team to perform the Saturn translation. If the entire game is as authentic as these character movement demos are, you're in for quite a treat. It should be the perfect complement to Fighters MegaMix before VF3 finally appears on the Saturn.

FIGHTERS MEGAMIX







It's the confrontation that AM2 fighting game fans have only been able to dream about... until now. Bahn from Fighting Vipers takes on the sheer power of Virtua Fighter's Akira Yuki. Now you might think that the VF character would totally overwhelm old Bahn with the sheer power and diversity of his attacks, but the Viper boy does good, mostly down to his armour and power counter techniques.

In the version we played, the lack of power counters for the VF players really gave the Vipers a tangible advantage. The Virtua Fighter do benefit however from having the majority of their VF3 techniques included. Both the FV and VF characters are able to use the escape technique with any of the X, Y or Z buttons as Akira is doing (top picture).



The heavy-hitters of the AM2 fighting universe come together in one mega game! Jeffry (left) is still looking for prize money, Sanman (centre) is just as powerful as ever whilst Wolf (right) has some awesome grapples from VF3!



VF3 move action as Kage takes down Tokio.



Another new technique from the Kagemeister!



Sarah and Jacky's Chicago background has walls now!



It's the top secret AM2 project no-one knew about until November 6. And it's coming out in Japan before Christmas! It's Fighting Vipers vs Virtua Fighter 2... and more! It's going to destroy the insolent "Tekken" series once and for all. It's Fighters MegaMix and it's a revelation!

In all honesty, nobody outside of Sega's upper echelons knew anything about this until the tail-end of the E3 show in Japan early in November. And even when Yu Suzuki called a "Power-Up" press conference to announce the game, nobody could quite believe it. But it's true. AM2 are developing an all-new, original 3D fighting game exclusively for Saturn - the first project they've undertaken which ISN'T an arcade conversion, even though it's based on their greatest coin-ops ever. All of them.

Fighters MegaMix is best described as a meeting of AM2's deadliest characters. All of the Fighting Vipers are present, as are the entirety of the Virtua Fighter 2 cast. And there's more. Original 3D fighting characters have been created by AM2 for inclusion in this MegaMix, but for the time being, they remain clouded in mystery (see the appropriate box-out for our speculation).

Basically, Fighters MegaMix is the culmination of two years of AM2's 3D fighting game brilliance. The amazing engine that powered Virtua Fighter 2 and Fighting Vipers has finally come to the end of its natural lifespan. At the self-same "Power-Up" meeting, Mr Suzuki announced that AM2 are starting work on converting Virtua Fighter 3 to the Saturn. That means all-new routines and technology, probably based on an all-new SGL operating system. Fighters MegaMix is the final game from AM2 to use the system.

THE PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT RUMOURS

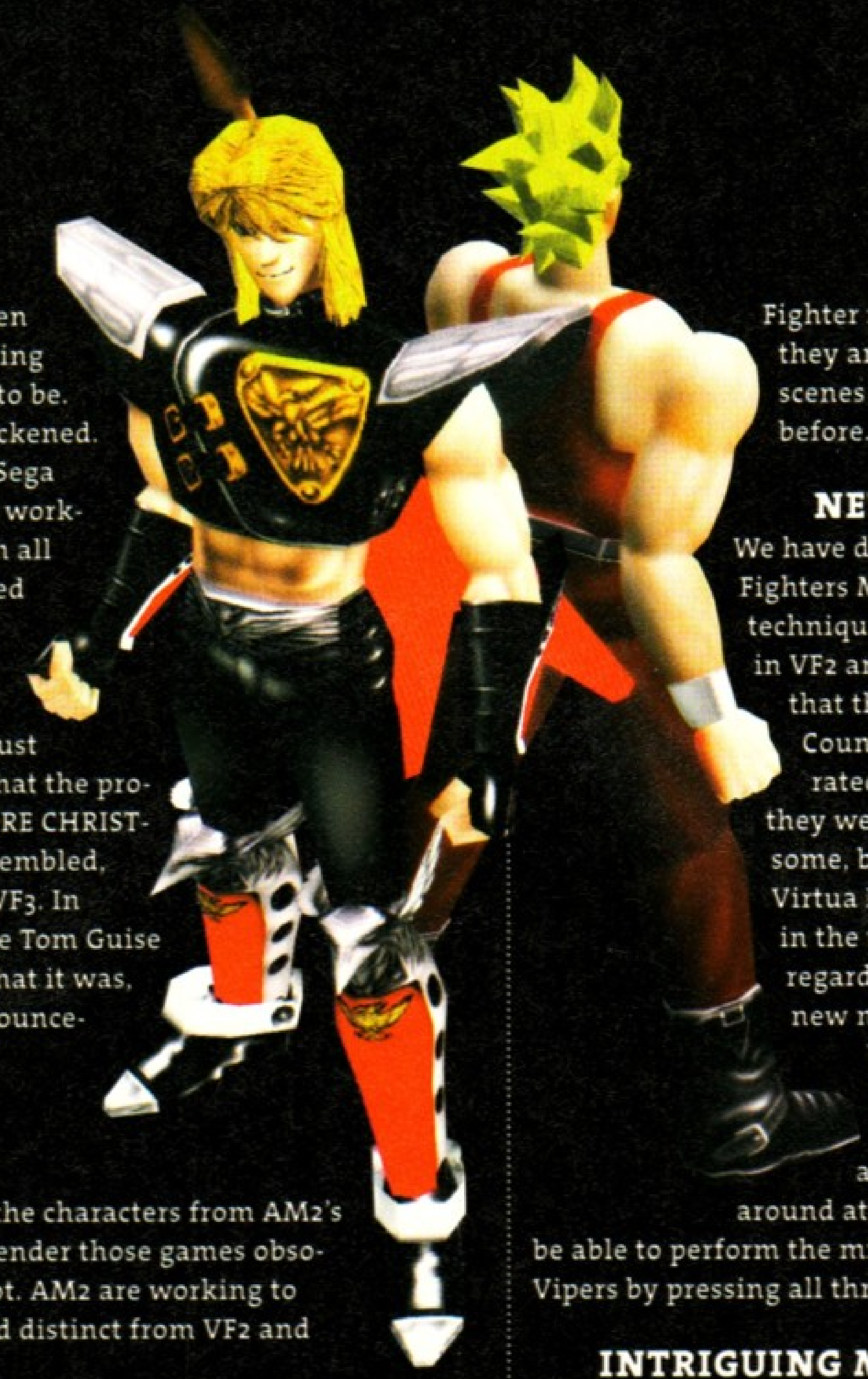
At the beginning of October, word reached SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE that the AM2 team behind Fighting Vipers had been whisked away and placed on a new top secret project as soon as

It's the surprise announcement of the season as Vipers and Fighters meet for the ultimate 3D fighting experience!





Shun Di cannot be underestimated in Fighting MegaMix since he has most of his amazing new VF3 techniques at his disposal, which gives his fighting style a far higher level of fluidity. Kumachan remains pretty much as ridiculous as he was in Fighting Vipers, but he's not a secret character any more, accessible right from the beginning on the Tekken-style character select screen.



WHO'S IN IT?

This list of 22 confirmed characters has found its way into our hands.

VIRTUA FIGHTERS

Akira: The most versatile and feared fighting power on Earth is better than ever.
Kage: Akira's nearest rival. Master of ninja stealth and mystic power.
Sarah: Brainwashed powerhouse and pawn of the sinister J6 Syndicate.
Jacky: Jeet Kune Do master and Indy Car master.
Lau: Cook. Poet. Master of the most incredible combination strikes on the planet.
Pai: Slight, but powerful. Her reversal attacks are now even more powerful.
Jeffry: Pancratium battler still fighting for prize money to buy a new boat.
Wolf: Still striving to prove the power of wrestling over all arts.
Lion: Mantis Fist expert fights to escape his father's aristocratic clutches.
Shun: Drunken Master who fights for no reason other than he fancies it.
Dural: The culmination of the J6 Syndicate's technology and power.

FIGHTING VIPERS

Bahn: Mysterious gang leader who fights with the techniques of many cultures.
Picky: Skateboard fighter caught up in the urban warfare of Armstone City.
Grace: Rollerblade-wearing, combination expert with a cold heart of steel.
Sanman: Large wrestler with a bizarre fixation with the number "three".
Raxel: Battle rocker with a unique style all his own.
Tokio: Blink and you'll miss his lightning fast combination attacks.
Candy: A jill of all trades, if you will, particularly adept at air throws.
Jane: Battle-hardened marine drop-out with immense power.
BM: Mysterious boss fighter from Armstone, his head is shaped like a viper.
Mahler: Weaker than BM and now without his helmet!
KumaChan: Comedy Vipers mascot returns... much as he was in FV.

the PAL version of FV had been completed. We thought nothing of it. Virtua Fighter 3, it had to be.

From there, the plot thickened. It transpired that the entire Sega Saturn division of AM2 were working on the same project, with all others having been suspended until the mystery game was complete. Speculation still centred on Virtua Fighter 3 until the rumour emerged (just before the announcement) that the project would be available BEFORE CHRISTMAS (in Japan). The world trembled, as this effectively ruled out VF3. In all the world, only puny little Tom Guise on CVG managed to guess what it was, just prior to Yu Suzuki's announcement on November 6.

WHAT ABOUT THE GAME?

If Fighters MegaMix has all the characters from AM2's top fighting games, does it render those games obsolete? Maybe, but probably not. AM2 are working to make this game separate and distinct from VF2 and Fighting Vipers.

From the screenshots, it's clear to see that the high-resolution of VF2 has been sacrificed to include all of the light-sourcing and extra 3D scenery of Fighting Vipers.

AM2 are promising that the game will include backgrounds with or without Fighting Vipers' walls. It's up to you if you want them in there. The style of play emphasises the speed of Vipers over the technical accuracy of VF2. But just imagine what the power-packed Akira could do in an arena with walls. Just imagine what he'd look like fully light-sourced! Well imagine no longer. Look at the pictures and tremble.

Look, this game is going to be amazing, the culmination of every fighting fan's dreams!

THE BACKGROUNDS

As explained previously, Fighters MegaMix includes the walls and fences of Fighting Vipers, but we can expect to see a great many more original backgrounds. The VF characters are being represented with enhanced versions of the backdrops in Virtua Fighter 1. AM2 have especially emphasised that they are concentrating on making many new scenes which players wouldn't have seen before.

NEW TECHNIQUES FOR ALL

We have discovered that all of the characters in Fighters MegaMix are to receive new attacking techniques in addition to the moves they sported in VF2 and Fighting Vipers. AM2 have confirmed that the VF characters are set to have Power Counter and Armour Breaker moves incorporated into their fighting style, although they wear no armour (thank god). But get this: some, but not all, of their techniques from Virtua Fighter 3 are set to be included! Far less in the way of detail has been spelt out with regards to the Vipers - just that they will have new moves.

What we can reveal is that the ESCAPE manouevre from Virtua Fighter 3 (accessible in Vipers' Hyper Mode) is available, allowing characters to dodge around attacks. Additionally, all characters will be able to perform the mid-air recovery technique from Fighting Vipers by pressing all three buttons whilst airborne.

INTRIGUING MYSTERIES

The one-player game has yet to be fully described to our satisfaction, especially as the SoJ press release was so vague, talking about taking a selection of characters through different courses up against other fighters. What actually transpires is very similar to Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3, with different "courses" through the game, each based on a certain theme - for example an all-girl roster of opponents. Apparently the more courses you complete, the more open up and therein lies the path to the secret characters.

SO WHEN IT'S OUT?

It's going to be a pre-Christmas import frenzy with the Japanese version out in the shops on December 21. There's going to be a bit more of a wait for the official UK version though, which appears in the shops during the first quarter of 1997 (no firm release date has been set). However, since this is an AM2 product with a fair bit of lead time, we have been assured of a PAL conversion which could well be superior even to VF2! Shertinga!



The VF characters have armour-indicators, but this is from an early version. It's been removed in the one we saw.



Overhead chop to Kumachan's cods!



Notice how Wolf's background now has a Fighting Vipers style fence? Good eh?

ENHANCED MODES

VF and Fighting Vipers have included the most comprehensive list of game variations we've seen in home fighting games, but this has been increased still further in Fighters MegaMix. In addition to VF2's excellent Team Battle Mode, we can reveal that AM2 have included a Capcom-style Survival Mode. Here, you choose one character and go up against the entire fighting roster with just one energy bar of life. How far will you get?

Additionally, we're pleased to report that the Training Mode of Fighting Vipers has been incorporated. With over 30 characters (by our reckoning) in the game, mastering all of their moves is going to take ages, so this will be exceptionally helpful.





Jane prepares to jump from the fence at Sarah (top left). Bahn powerslides Akira (top right). Akira's power finally begins to overwhelm Vipers' Bahn (bottom left). A full view of Wolf's new Viperised stage, complete with fenced (bottom right). In the centre picture we see Sarah using one of her VF3 kick techniques on Viper equivalent character, Grace.

FIGHTERS MEGAMIX: I'VE PLAYED IT!

It's no real secret that SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE gets to play all of the big Saturn games first, but even so I felt a huge amount of excitement at having a few hours' play on what is now easily my most wanted videogame.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The first impression when I played it: it's very Fighting Vipers. The system used in MegaMix is virtually identical and in the version I played the speed of the game suited the Vipers more than the VF characters. A few more minutes in and it all kind of sunk in - the Tekken style stages with no walls (which are ace), the phenomenal lighting effects (much, much better than Vipers even though the same system is used) and the multiple routes through the one-player game. Stunning. *I MUST HAVE THIS GAME - NOT EXCUSES.*

ALL WILL BE REVEALED NEXT MONTH!

Let's face facts: this is going to be one of the biggest Saturn releases EVER. That being the case, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE has secured the last word in coverage (as ever). You can see full-on details of this most exciting of videogames in the next issue (which will have a brilliant MegaMix cover) where all of your questions about this game will be answered. It is a videogames magazine you simply cannot afford to miss. Understand?

THE MYSTERY CHARACTERS

The official Sega of Japan/AM2 press release gave pretty comprehensive details on what Fighters MegaMix would be all about, including a full-on characters list detailing participants from both Fighting Vipers and Virtua Fighter 2.

However, there is a passing reference to characters from Virtua Cop also appearing in the game! We can only imagine from this throwaway remark that in addition to the characters mentioned elsewhere on these pages that Rage, Smart or probably Janet will make it into the game (expect an ENORMOUS surprise should you find this specific character).

Think about it, they'd fit into the game perfectly. Check out the CG renders of these three in last month's SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. They're already kitted out with Fighting Vipers-style armour. But who knows how they'd move? We'll find out for sure next month.



HUNDREDS OF NEW MOVES!

The characters are more than just rehashes of what has come before. The VF players control almost identically to VF3 (minus a few moves), but because the Vipers engine is used it plays differently to any of the Virtua Fighter games out there, including the phenomenal Model 3 coin-op. The AM2 press release seemed to mention the new techniques in passing as bonus extras - this ISN'T the case. There's acres of mileage to get out of the new techniques as the VFers feel fresher than ever!

OTHER STUFF I CAN'T TELL YOU...

I'm also aching to tell you about all the other new stuff - the new backgrounds, the secret characters (some of these fighters will provoke much excitement, I guarantee it) - even a description of the options screen will have 3D fighting fans begging me for further details. Unfortunately, if I did tell you any of this I would be killed (doubtlessly slowly and painfully), so for the moment I must be silent.

... BUT I WILL NEXT MONTH

To sum up, all these superlatives for a game which can't be more than 60% complete at the time I saw it? Unbelievable, but true. In fact the only complaints any one is going to have is that the high-res mode of VF2 isn't here - as I said, the Vipers engine is used. But I really can't imagine any one moaning when they actually play the game. Personally, I can't wait...

RICH LEADBETTER


BUG TOO!
LUV GUN

Remember when the Saturn first came out and great games didn't come out that often? Remember how Bug! came out and everyone said it was great so you bought it? Remember how promising, albeit flawed it was? Well here comes Bug Too! Which will be better, promise.

It had to happen. After a most successful outing last year, Bug! has returned to the Saturn in a brand new, highly exciting adventure. First of all, let me just say that I (Rich) really didn't like the original Bug! much at all. Although I could see that the game was very well designed and quite original in its own way, I just really hated the absurd difficulty level but most of all I despised the American sitcom humour. It wasn't funny.

Thus it was with some apprehension that I approached Bug Too! I was promised by Sega that the game had been completely recoded, with a fairer difficulty level and much better sense of humour. Now I have to admit that having played what is admittedly an extremely early version of the game I am quite looking forward to the finished article. Allow me to continue.



IT'S A MONSTER

Bug Too! is big, right. If you thought the first game was rather on the large side, you're going to be extremely surprised by the sheer vastness of this sequel. In actual fact, our level select version had well over 50 different levels. Some of these were bonus rounds, but suffice to say that all of the normal stages are just as voluminous as they were in the original game (that's large). In the interests of good gameplay, each area of the game has a select stage, allowing you to access any of the levels you want.

As in the first game, the levels are based on spoofs of well known genre movies, so expect the likes of Lawrence of Arabia and Evil Dead to be mercilessly ripped off and given the expected Bug! treatment.

A BONUS SUB-GAME FRENZY!

The original Bug! had its fair share of bonus game action, including a nice little race against Sonic the Hedgehog! For Bug Too! the bonus action has most definitely been slotted into the position marked "overdrive". And here's why.

For a start there are a bewildering amount of little games to find, including a enhanced version of the classic arcade machine Q*Bert, which looks great using the Bug! engine. There's also a kind of giant fruit machine as well as a racing game to discover.

Once again, there's little point describing in detail what goes on in these levels because it's clear that the ideas are very embryonic at this stage, but the sheer wealth of them should make for plenty of variety between the normal Bug! stages.

ALL-NEW SPECIAL EFFECTS!

Although it made use of the Saturn's polygon and texture-mapping capabilities, the original Bug! was a bit slack in making use of the Sega machine's powerful special effects. As you might imagine, this has changed totally in Bug Too! with some marvellous set-pieces and little touches that make the game far more appealing. For example, on the Evil Dead 2 stages, an eerie mist

Bug Too! continues the genre movie rip-off theme that was apparent in the first game only it's a lot better this time, honest!



Hodloads of action from the Evil Dead stage in the big four pictures, along with Bug! showing off on the carnival stage (centre). One of the biggest problems we had with the first game was the fact that meanies appeared on-screen with little warning, making it very frustrating unless you had a photographic memory. Luckily, the Bug! Team have seen fit to make matters simpler and thus more enjoyable in the sequel.



As well as a whole new bunch of heroes to get to grips with (see the side bar to the right), Bug Too! features far superior levels and a lot more going on in them such as the four-way spinning crossroads (above).





NEW HEROES FOR HIRE

One of the big enhancements for Bug Too! is the inclusion of extra heroes for the player to control. Now the version of the game we have is extremely early, so we can't say for sure if this is the final roster of characters. However, these three are currently selectable:



BUG!

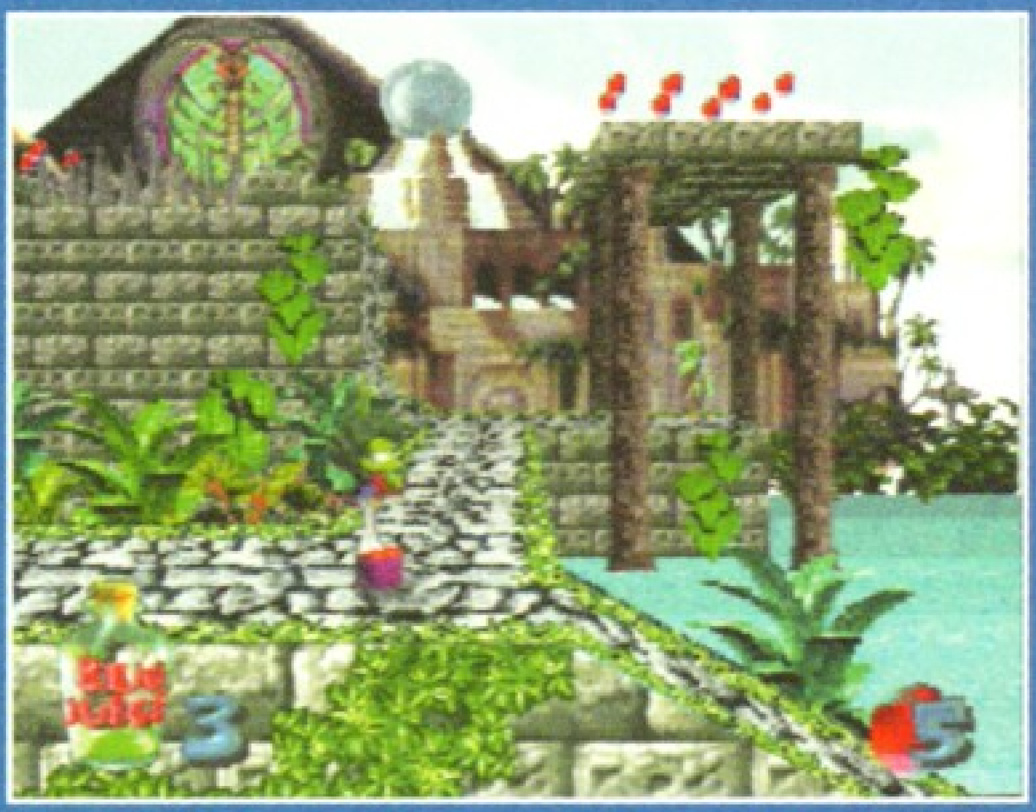
This guy shouldn't be too much of a mystery being as he is almost identical to his original appearance in the first game. Bug! runs, jumps and spits at his opponents (when has powered up with the appropriate insectoid mucus) and stomps on his foes Mario-style, accompanied by hilarious Hanna Barbera style sound effects.



SUPERFLY!

A new character created for the Bug Too! game. At the moment he controls very similarly to the eponymous Bug! - he's just a little faster.





Here's a good example of some of the enhanced graphics in Bug Too! It looks lovely, n'est pas?



SuperFly goes swimming.





There are extra hazards in front of you in this new adventure, like this huge bed of spikes.

Bug is back in an all-new adventure with a bunch of extra levels and better graphics - plus far superior gameplay and design.

descends a bit later on in the stage, as you should see in some of the screenshots on these pages. Another nice effect is the inclusion of some wacky platform designs. In the first Bug! you could walk "up" platforms and suchlike - this has been retained in the sequel, but there are some ace corkscrew-style platforms that spiral off into the distance. And yes, the whole screen spins around as you walk down them. Excellent stuff.

WITH NEW ADDED GAMEPLAY!

The speed of the sequel isn't really that much different from the original Bug! However, the engine running the game has been optimised, allowing the programmers a fair bit of leeway in bringing extra detail to the stages. As you can see from the screenshots, the slightly spartan look of the original has given way to far more sumptuous visuals in the sequel.

But the best news of all has to be that the Bug! team have heeded some of the criticisms levelled at the first game in that it was just too frustrating. A lot of the time the 3D perspective didn't reveal enemy creatures until they'd had their evil way with Bug! making it a most frustrating game. Things appear to be far fairer in Bug Too! which can only be good news.

WHEN'S IT OUT

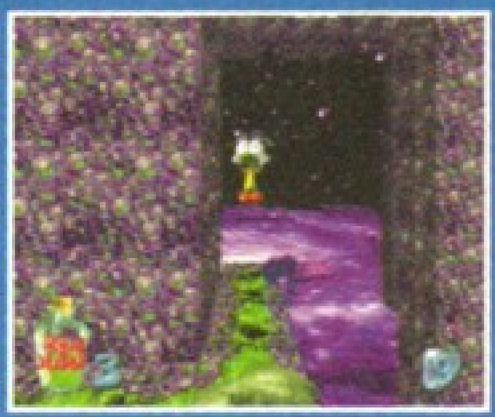
Bug Too is currently scheduled for release sometime in February, so it's a bit surprising that we've had to cover such an unfinished version of the game. Suffice to say that the team behind the game are making excellent progress and are well on schedule for getting Bug Too! out in time. Expect a preview in the next edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE and a review in the magazine following that one, as long as everything goes to plan.

MAGGOTY DOG

This infested lowlife is smaller than the average hero and tends to walk around in small jumps, making him more difficult to control than either SuperFly or Bug!. His jumping ability is also being called into question. Doubtless there'll be areas of the game where his size makes him the only man for the job.

BUT... BUT HOW?

At the moment you can select any of the three heroes at the beginning of the game, but because the version of Bug Too! we have is so early, who knows how the triple character action will actually work out in the finished title. Maybe only certain levels will work with certain characters. Perhaps more abilities for each of the heroes will be programmed in to differentiate them more. In fact, it would be accurate to state that we're surprisingly clueless about this regard of the game at the time of writing. Look out for some hard answers in a future edition of this fine mag.



The space space here.



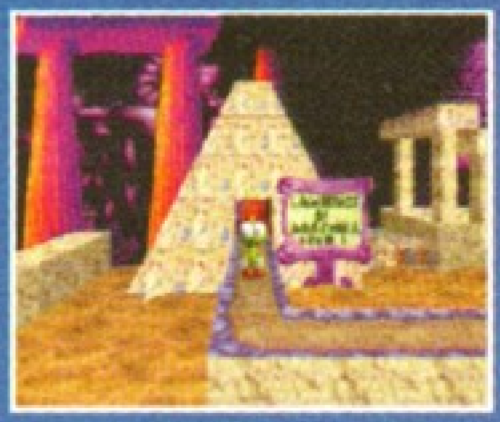
Some carnival level action.



Ooh looks lovely.



More carnival stuff.



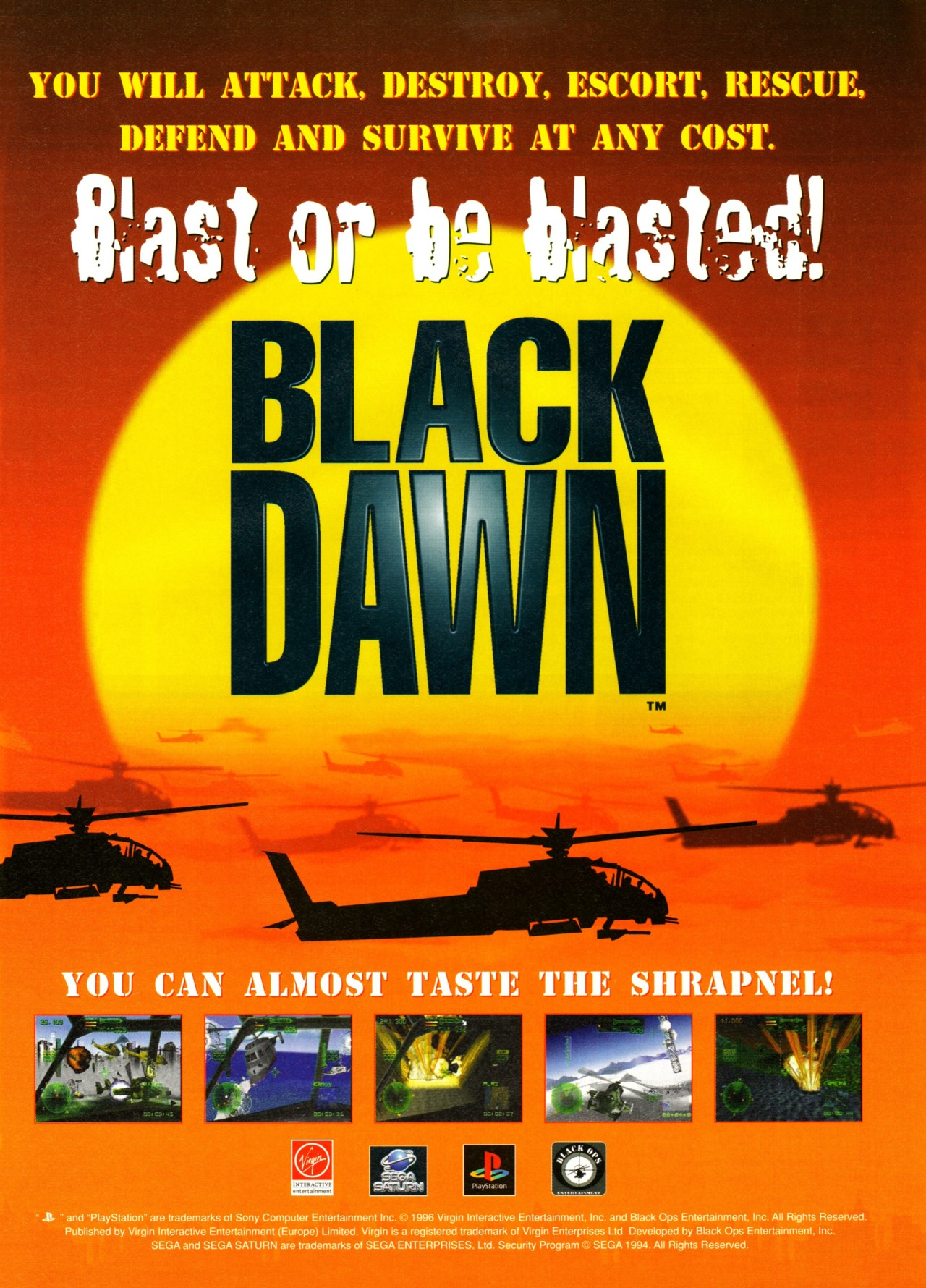
More new graphics! Look!



There are a wealth of bonus sub-games to discover in Bug Too! Like this Q*Bert style one (above).



A vast array of Bug Too! shenanigans here taking place on the new Space Stage. Notice the spiral platforms (centre) which spin the entire screen around as you walk down them.


YOU WILL ATTACK, DESTROY, ESCORT, RESCUE,
DEFEND AND SURVIVE AT ANY COST.
Blast or be blasted!
BLACK
DAWN
TM
YOU CAN ALMOST TASTE THE SHRAPNEL!
Virgin
INTERACTIVE entertainment
SEGA SATURN
PlayStation
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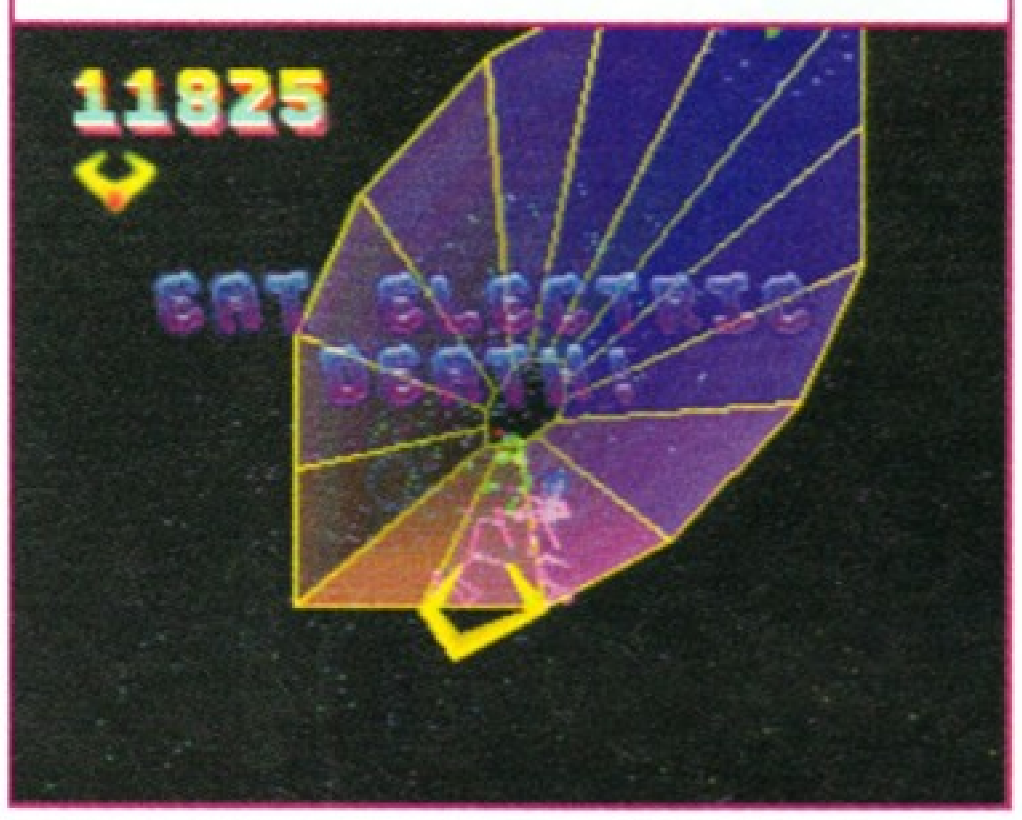
TEMPEST 2000

We might laugh at the tragedy of Jaguar owners, but they've always exclusively owned one of the greatest games ever made - Tempest 2000. Except now it's coming to Saturn. Poor old Jaguar owners, hahahahaaa!

BY	INTERPLAY
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOT 'EM UP
RELEASE	JANUARY 1997

MAELSTROM MUSIC!

Jaguar Tempest 2000 has some of the best tunes of any video game – a mix of superb Prodigy-style rave tracks. However, they were streamed off a cartridge. Thanks to its CD format the Saturn has gone one better, with remixed version of the music. More outlandish sound-effects and samples all feature!

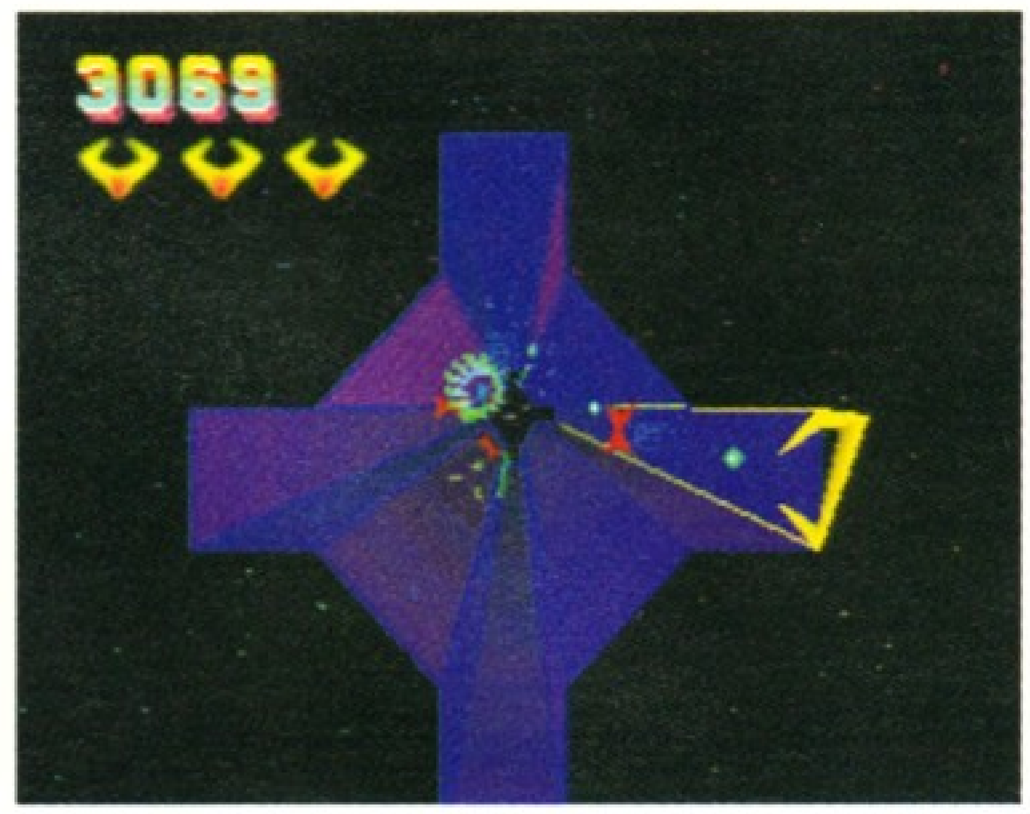


TAMING THE TEMPEST!

If you've never played Tempest before, it may all look like a load of ambiguous shapes and colours to you. In preparation for this awesome blaster, here's the Sega Saturn Magazine crash course to understanding Tempest.



The further you get into the game, the bigger the range of meanies that set upon you.

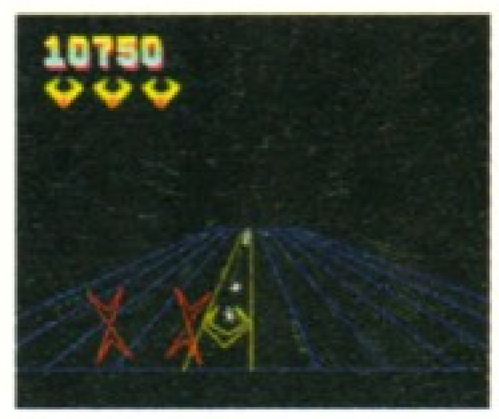


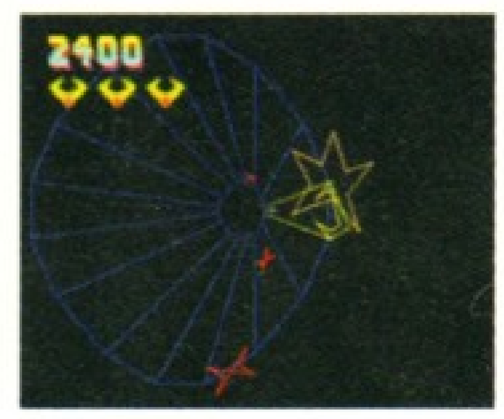
The excellent colouring effects from the Jaguar original are virtually identical on Saturn.

When veteran programmer Jeff Minter decided to update the legendary Atari coin-op Tempest, he knew what he was he doing. Tempest still is one of the most innovative coin-ops ever made. At a time when vectors were the most advanced visuals you could get, Atari used them to dazzingly stylish effect – creating a genuinely alien looking game instead of trying to poorly represent recognisable ships or landscapes. The result is one of the most fiendishly hardcore shoot 'em ups devised!

With Tempest 2000, Minter kept all the super-stylish vectors that made the original so unique. Rather than spicing up the graphics with poor textures, he demonstrated the advance in technology by upping the vector count! More laser lines, exploding particles and all-new fantastical splashes of warping colour turned it into a game as brilliantly unique as the original was in its day.

What's more, we have to concede that it was the Jaguar hardware that made the game possible.





For retro fans (like our Dave), you get original Tempest too!

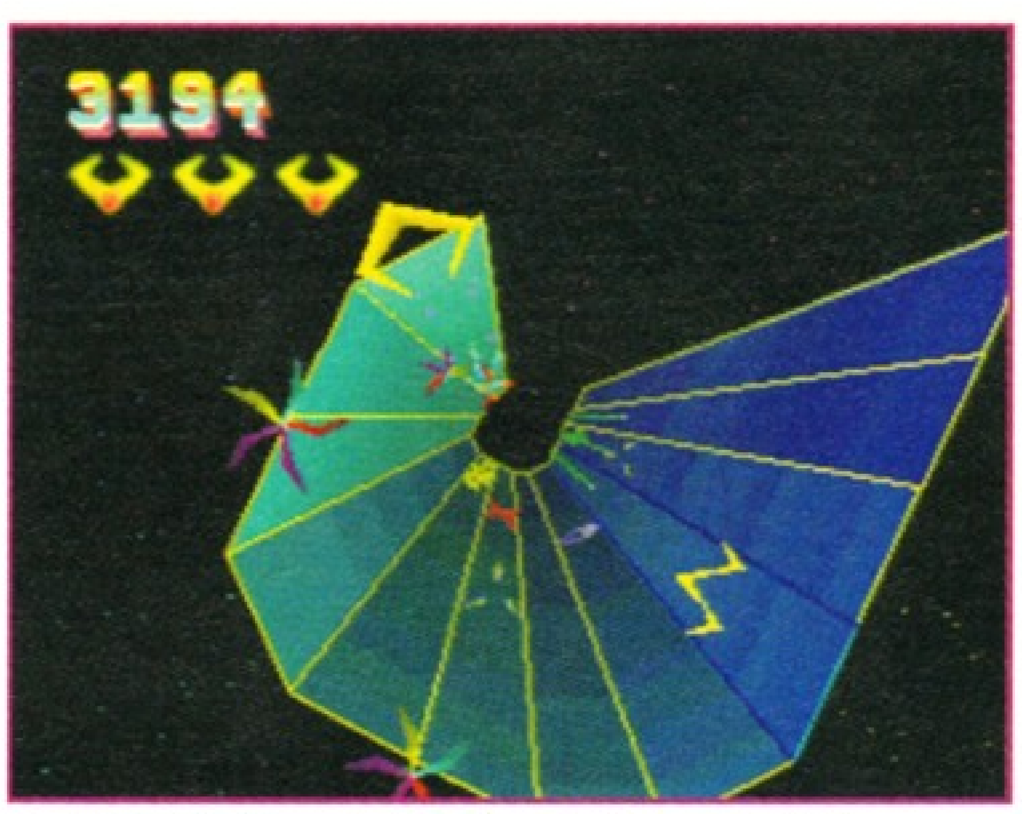
Believe it or not, the Jaguar featured some impressive custom internals that made it a cinch to do the warping oily effects and multi-particle graphics of Tempest 2000. We can concede this fact because High Voltage, the developers of the Saturn version, have managed to replicate the effect to nigh-on perfect effect through sheer programming power!

By combining the Saturn's 3D polygon handling prowess with its phenomenal sprite-shifting ability, they've reproduced all the dazzling effects of the Jaguar original. And if you've ever experienced Tempest 2000 before, you'll know what that means.

The Jaguar's most playable game blasts its way onto Saturn... and it's an audio-visual apocalypse of epic proportions!



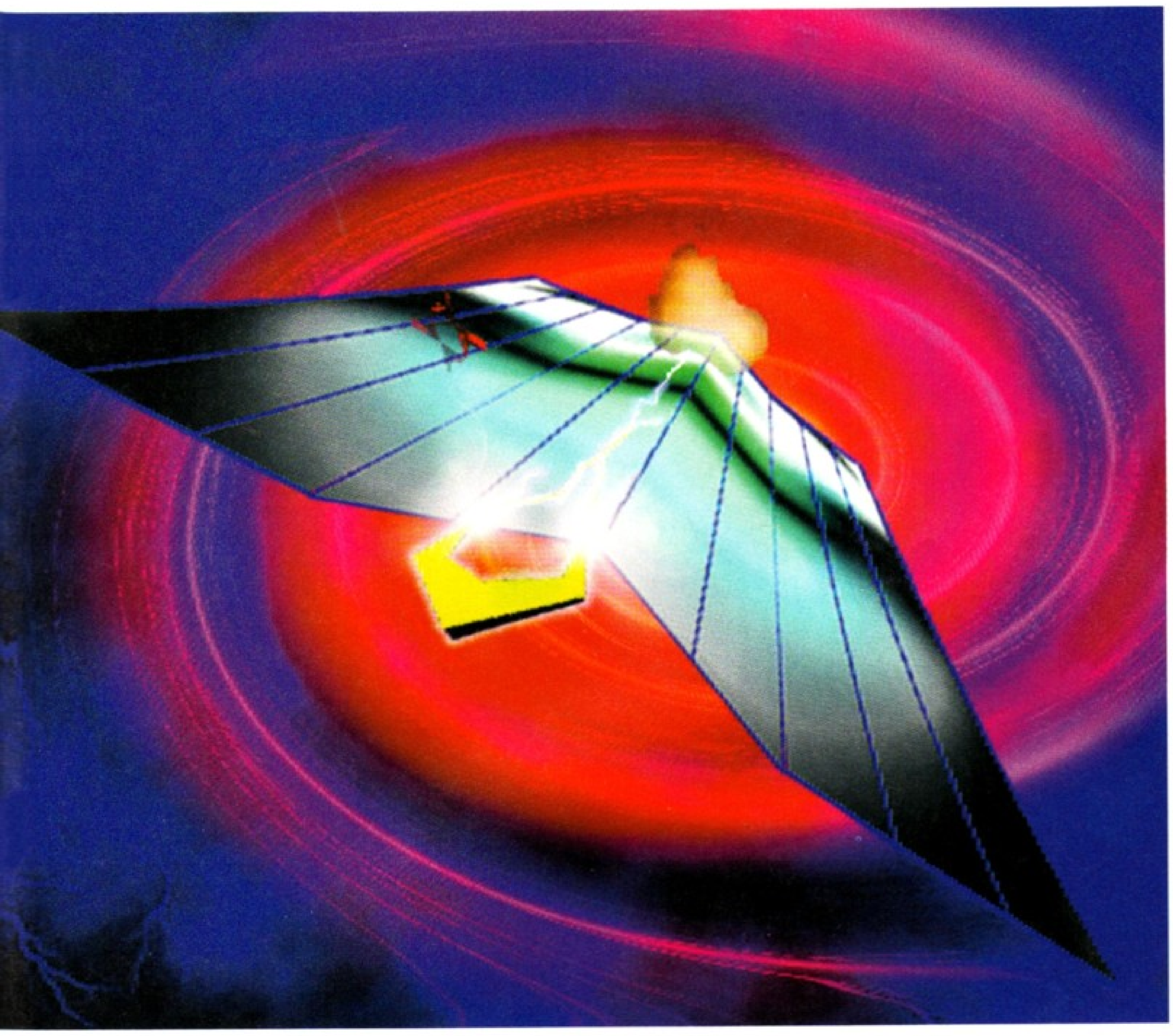
You control the claw which on the front end of a 3D tunnel. Moving left or right, you flip around the edge of the tunnel.

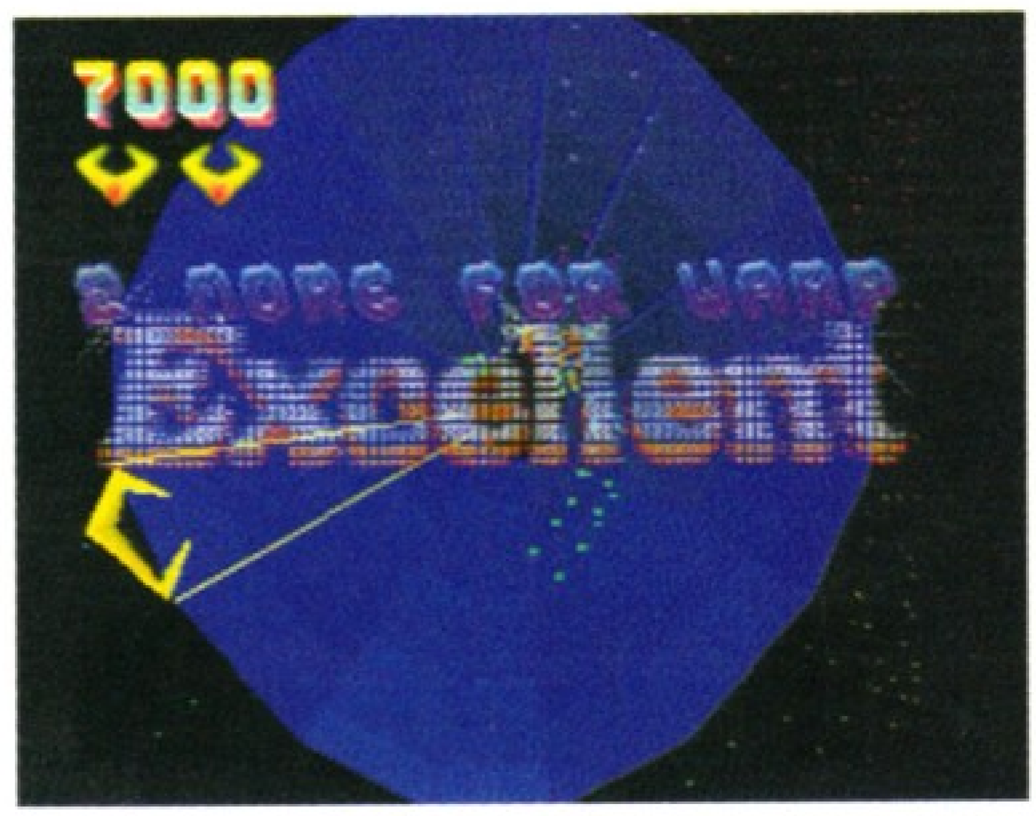


Starting at the far end of the tunnel, aliens work their way up the tunnel in an attempt to get to you.



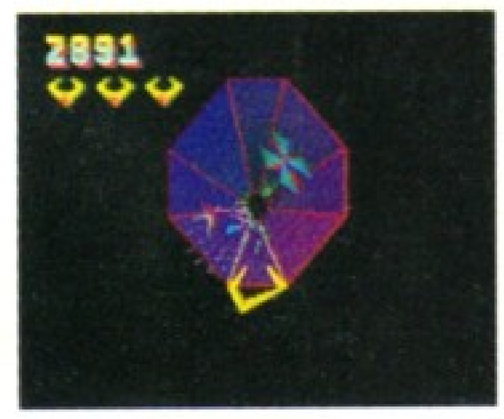
All you've go to do is shoot them before they get to you. Easier said than done, as the baddies get tougher.





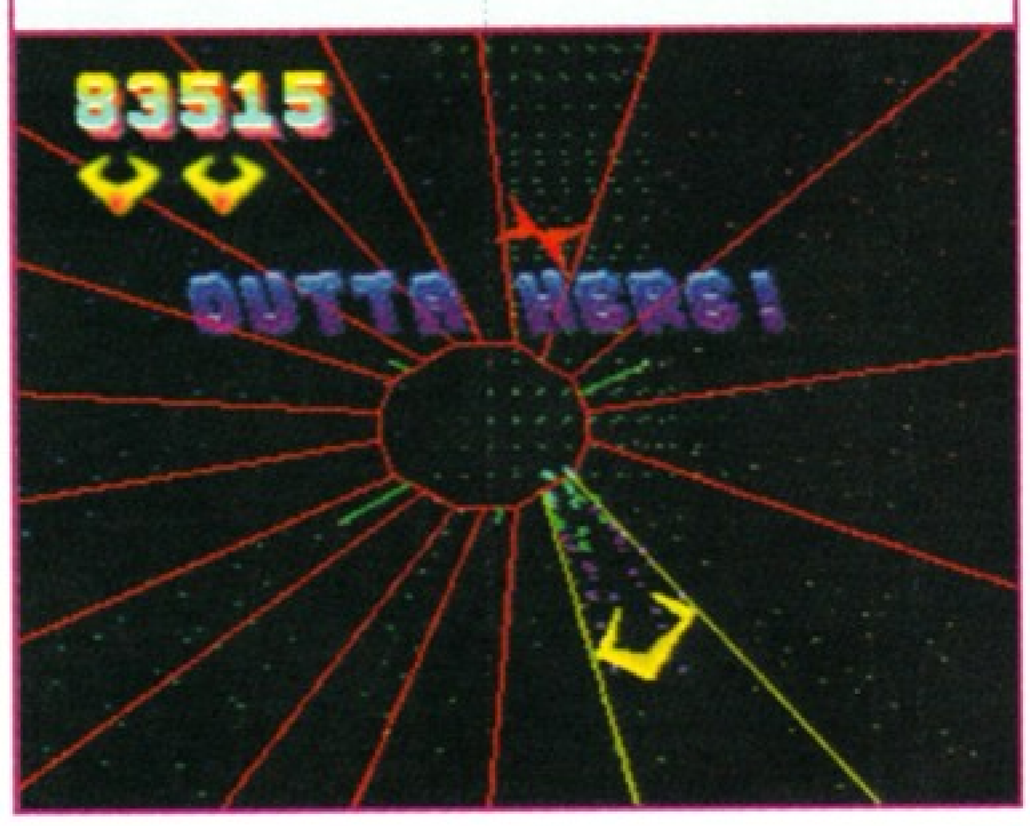
Boom! Some lovely visual congratulations.





POWER UP!

One big update to the original coin-op format, was the addition of power-ups to Tempest 2000. Certain enemies release tubes which race up the tunnel. Collecting these provides rapid-shot weapons, jump facility (essential on later levels for avoiding lethal enemies), AI-Droid (assists in shooting) an, after all these have been collected – a warp. These are the most important part of the game. Collect three of these and you get sent to a hypnotically-stunning bonus stage. We can't show you it though, because it isn't in the Saturn version yet!



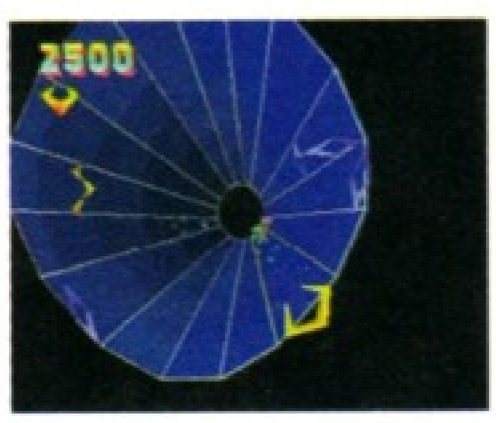
We can best describe it as being akin to flying through a skyborne laser-light show during a centenary firework display, while Ming attacks Earth with hothail and lightsabers are thrown at you. Something like that anyway!

Mind-blowing as these graphics are, they'd be little more than a fancy screensaver if the gameplay wasn't up to scratch. Well, up-to-scratch is an underestimation of Tempest 2000's gameplay. It's one of the most perfectly honed blasters created. There are 99 levels of gradually increasing difficulty. And they make for a super addictive, reflex-pushing highscore challenge. All the levels have already been programmed into the Saturn version, and even though they've yet to be fully fine-tuned, they're already more than on-course to match the challenge of the Jaguar original.

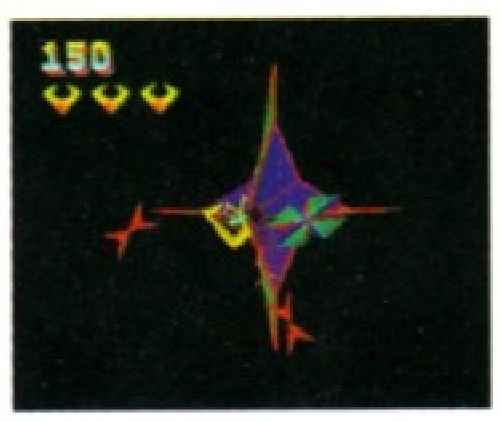
Next to the likes of Virtua Fighter 2 and Quake, there are many people in this office that consider Tempest 2000 to be one of the greatest games ever made. If this conversion makes the grade – which looks highly likely at this stage – it means another killer title for the Saturn. Reckon we'll find out next month when we review the sucker!



The sound's great too, with Prodigy-style soundtracks.



Awesome visual capabilities!



This game is ACE.



Early aliens can't even harm you when they reach the top – providing you stay still while shooting.



Later though you get enemies that electrocute you, lethally zip around the rim, or even shoot back!



That' when you need to use your Super Zapper (smart bomb)! You only get one per stage though!

AREA 51

Okay, you bought Virtua Cop last year and it was seriously brilliant. But since then the old Virtua Gun has been left out of the action, with next to no support from the Saturn developing community. Apart from Chaos Control (snigger).

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	PUZZLE
RELEASE	DECEMBER





The sprites fit the FMV pretty well, despite the colour schemes.



Tom Guise visits his desk at EMAP's new Docklands HQ.



One of the big problems with these FMV titles is the fact that the super-imposed explosions look like enormous great orange puffs on-screen. Case in point (above).

Things have certainly changed over the course of the last couple of months. First of all we had the brilliant Virtua Cop 2, then we got Mighty Hits (reviewed this issue) and now we have Area 51 - a conversion of the little known coin-op, which has been bought up by Williams and unleashed by the power of GT Interactive.

So, what's the deal? Basically, it's time to jump onto the last train to FMV Central, because that's exactly what Area 51 is all about. The on-screen action is depicted with the joys of full-motion video, using cunningly overlaid sprites for you to shoot at. A similar effect was used on the latter FMV titles on the Mega-CD and it was abysmal... thankfully, the Saturn is more than capable of producing sprites which blend in seamlessly with the backgrounds (apart from the day-glo clothes, that is) so what we have here is a virtually arcade-perfect conversion of the coin-op, although the FMV window has been squeezed a bit in its transition from the arcades. The basic plot sees you infiltrating the infamous Area 51 (if you haven't seen Independence Day, this is where the US government is supposedly studying alien UFO technology and making their own flying saucers), and basically shooting everything... apart from your team-mates.



Think Virtua Cop in 2D, or maybe a more advanced form of Konami's Lethal Enforcers and that's what you have here. Hardly state of the art, yet strangely interesting and more to the point, quite enjoyable. The original arcade game did very well in the States and commands a pretty sizeable following, so it's bound to do pretty well with the Saturn fraternity over there. Stay with SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE for more UK details!

SHOOTING YOUR LOAD

There's been a severe dearth of software using the excellent Virtua Gun, with only the seminal Virtua Cop making use of the peripheral. Until now. Area 51 is just one of an increasing number of titles to appear recently offering full compatibility. Other titles to look out for include Cop 2, Mighty Hits and Die Hard Trilogy. Another title NOT to look out for is Chaos Control, which is reviewed in Out Now on page 96.



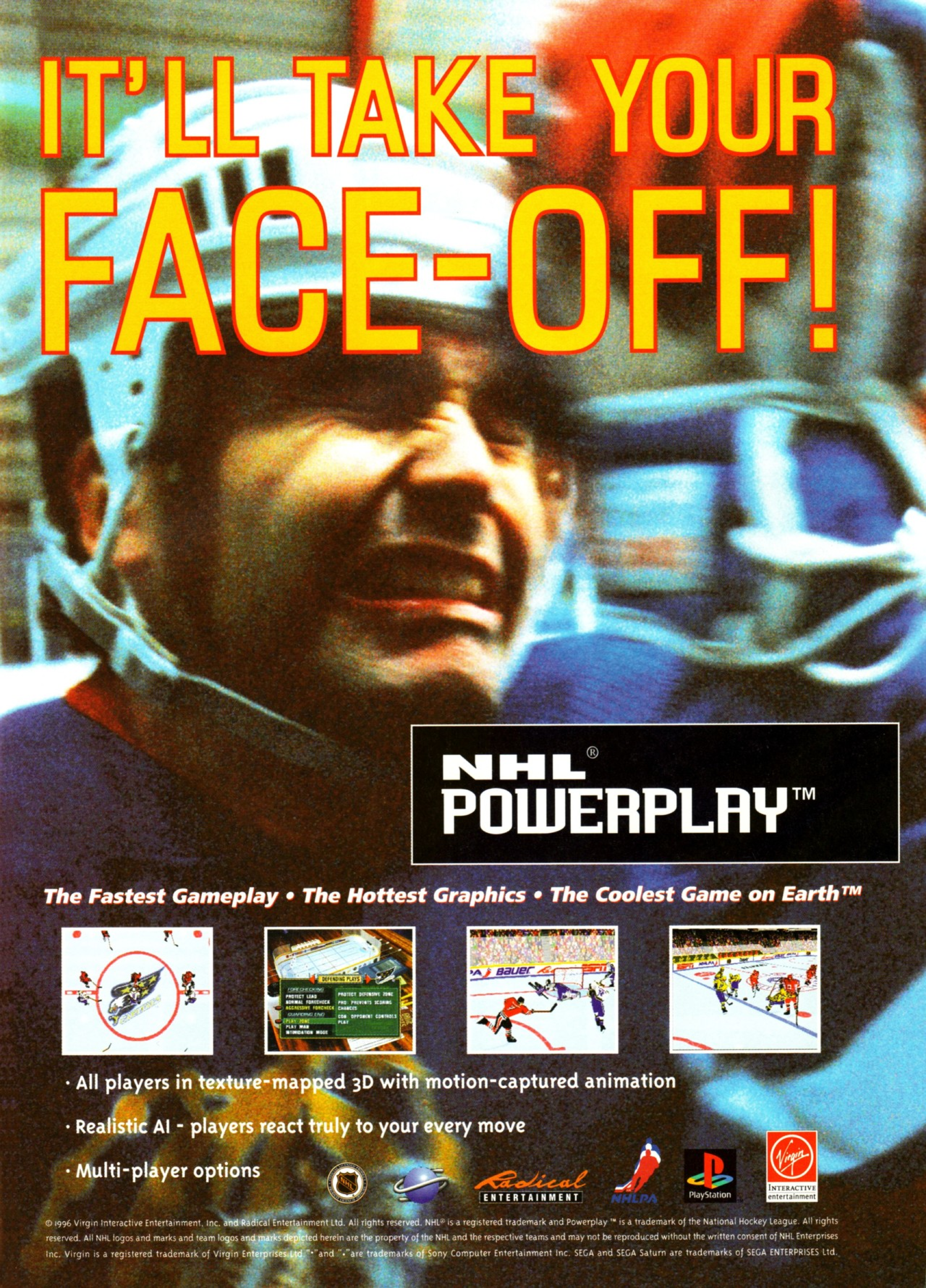
"Despite the smaller FMV window (and the fence stuck to your face), Area 51 is remarkably close to the coin-op original."



One thing that is a bit odd about Area 51 is the fact that the enemies can be firing at you for seconds, but they don't hit (unlike the Virtua Cop sharp-shooting enemies). Best just to gun them down like stinking pigs ASAP.





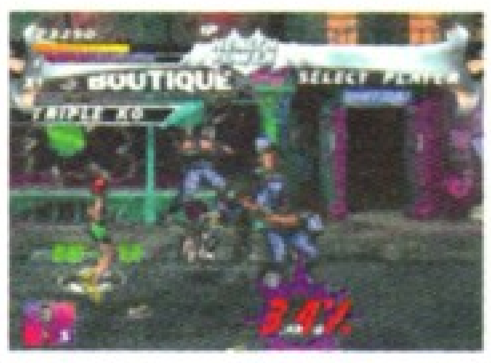


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BATMAN FOREVER

Love it or loathe it, Batman Forever was the most popular bat-flick of all-time. Probably because of the inclusion of be-wonderbra'd Nicole Kidman (insert your own bat-pole gag here). Unfortunately the delectable Mrs Cruise *hasn't* made it into this game. Boo!

BY	ACCLAIM
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	FIGHTING
RELEASE	TBA



Can you actually see what's going on here?



Well, suffice to say, it's an all-out fighting frenzy.







Ever played Streets of Rage or Final Fight? Well, this is virtually identical, just with a heap more power-ups and various bits of sprite-scaling trickery. As you slap the meanies about, percentage symbols appear to show you how much energy your opponents have left.

ENTER... THE RIDDLER

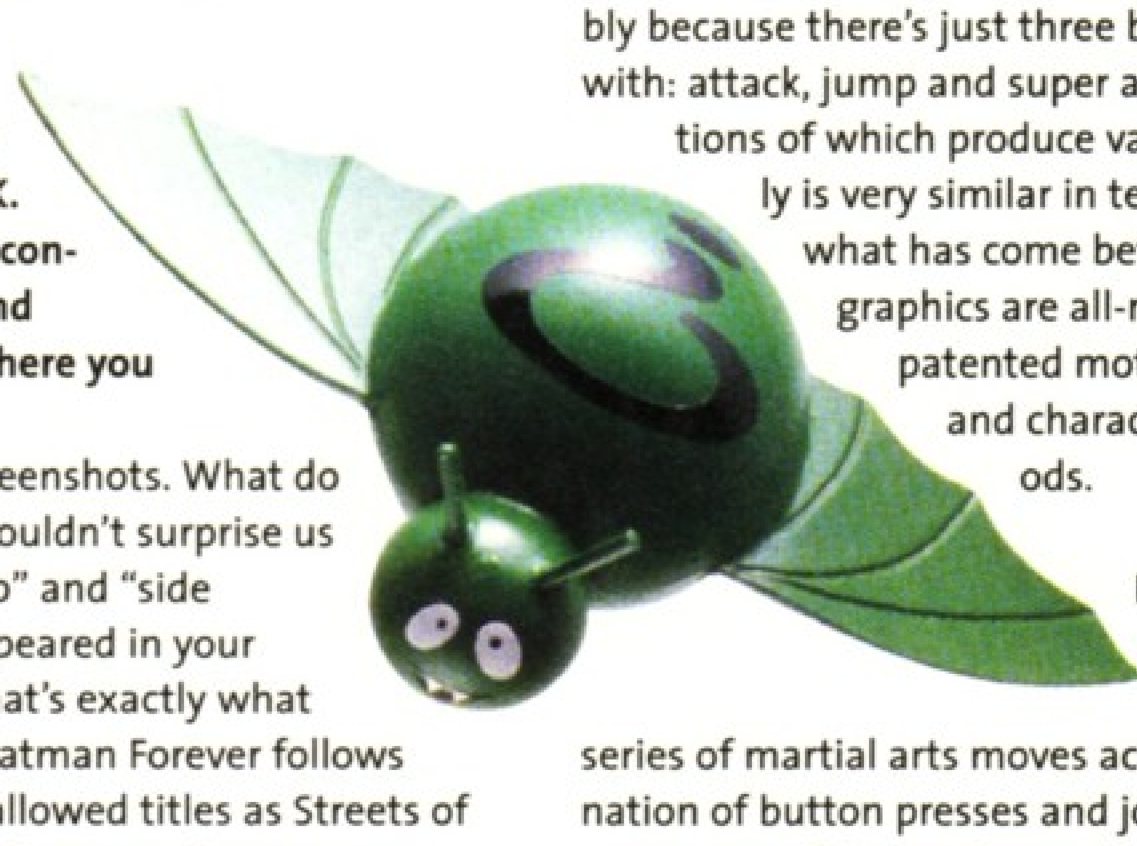
Rather than concoct any riddles as such, the Riddler tends to throw mystery icons around the playing area. Some of these have good effects on the Dark Knight, others bad. Worst of all must be the super-shrinker which reduces Bats to half-size. His fighting abilities remain unimpaired though, making for a rather bizarre spectacle. That self-same power-up can be reversed and used on your opponents, making them easy to take out.



THE BAT SHARK REPELLENT

Every so often, on his trips through the dark streets of Gotham, Batman happens to chance across Bat equipment mysteriously materialising around the place for no good reason (maybe Alfred's in command of some kind of Bat Transporter). Unfortunately, there's no Bat Shark Repellent from the 60s film (not that there's actually any sharks), but you do get an assortment of Bat goodies including the essential Batarangs (and Super Batarangs if you're lucky). So that's cool.

Acclaim are a pretty resourceful set of chaps you know. Not only do they release videogames for just about every videogames system under the Sun, they've also started out on producing their own arcade games. Their first, a conversion of Batman Forever, didn't really have much a presence in the UK. Undaunted, Acclaim have converted it to both Saturn and PlayStation - and this is where you get your first look at it.



Take a look at the screenshots. What do they say to you? Well, it wouldn't surprise us if the phrases "beat 'em up" and "side scrolling" mysteriously appeared in your mind. Probably because that's exactly what this game is. Yes indeed, Batman Forever follows in the footsteps of such hallowed titles as Streets of Rage, Final Fight and Double Dragon by giving you tons of foes to beat up as you continue your steady progression towards a confrontation with the final boss(es). In this case, the Riddler and Harvey Two-Face. Coo, just like the film.

The game's certainly a cinch to get it into, probably because there's just three buttons to get to grips with: attack, jump and super attack; various combinations of which produce various responses. It really is very similar in terms of gameplay to what has come before, although the graphics are all-new, using Acclaim's patented motion capture routines and character digitisation methods.

The techniques at Batman and Robins' disposal generally come down to a series of martial arts moves activated with a combination of button presses and joypad movements. Line up a series of foes in front of you and the combo-



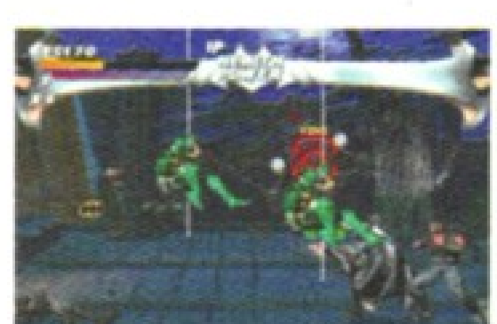
As well as smacking your opponents left or right (as is the custom in these games), you can also grab hold of them and punch them "towards" or "away" from the screen.



Biff! Aghhh! Ooyah!



Holy mishmash of sprites!



Some synchronised Bat-destruction!



Batman powers up and gets just a bit perturbed.



A super-powered Batman kicks ass.



Nope, can't really see what the deal is here.







A couple of bosses here.





Batman gets a smack to the chops.





Yet another scene of Bats powering up.

There's the Batmobile. Just why is Batman's chest symbol so effing big?

THE DYNAMIC DUO!

It's dynamic duo team-up action all of the way with Batman Forever Arcade! At the beginning of the game, you see a pretty damn excellent character selection screen, allowing you to choose between Batman and, er, Robin. However, to save arguments on who's who, you can both be the same character should you so wish. To be honest, there's not much to choose between them. Boo! You'd think Batman would be far harder than circus orphan boy Robin. Fans of the "Boy Wonder" might be disappointed to learn that there's no martial arts laundry-hanging subgame in this release. And no canoodling with Chase Meridian for Batman.

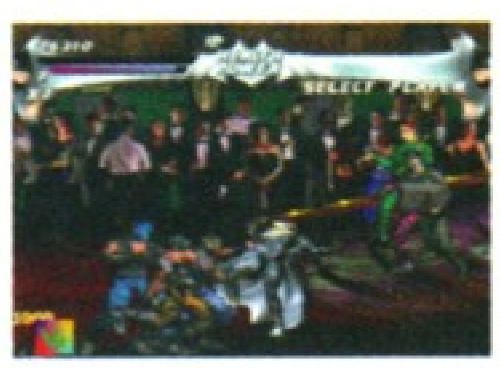


Acclaim's **little-know coin-op debut** gets the Sega Saturn treatment! But is an **arcade perfect conversion** good enough?

meter blasts into overdrive. Grabbing a foe by the scruff of the neck allows for some head-bashing and throwing action - just like Final Fight (and Streets of Rage). Aiding your attacking is the inclusion of a vast array of collectibles, ranging from extra bat-equipment to power-ups which allow the Dark Knight to pull off Street Fighter Alpha 2 style Custom Combinations.

As you might imagine, behind the all-new visuals lurks a pretty well-known game-style. Batman Forever succeeds in bringing the arcade game home - in fact, it's probably one of the closest translations ever seen on the Sega system. The question is, does the original game itself have the necessary depth and excitement to make it a worthwhile purchase in its new form as a home game? Such answers could well present themselves in a forthcoming issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE when we review the finished product. Until then, look at the screenshots and imagine what it's like.


I think we've got the idea now.


Hmm, yes. Definitely (yawn).



Batman in a sidescrolling beat 'em up eh? Ever played Batman Returns on Super NES?



JUST LIKE THE FILM

As you might imagine, the game's characters and scenarios are taken pretty much directly from the film. However, as you might imagine, some liberties have been taken with the backgrounds in order to make them fit into the side-scrolling fighting game scenario. Scenes like the streets of Gotham City, the Riddler's lair and the circus are well represented (although you fight as Bats in the latter, not Bruce Wayne as in the film). The gallery of villains facing you includes just about everyone from the film (such as Two-Face's girlfriends Sugar and Spice) as well as some new characters made especially for the game.



PREVIEW

DOOM

it's the game that launched an entire genre. And now, after much umming, ahhing and basic procrastination, it's finally about ready to appear on the Saturn. The game? Why - it's Doom of course!

BY	GT INTERACTIVE
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	DOOM-STYLE
RELEASE	DECEMBER

ANALOGUE ACTIVITIES

One thing Rage Software have done to take this beyond PlayStation Doom is to include support for the analogue controller (which you bought with NiGHTS). Doom was always far more intuitive when used with a mouse on PC and you get a similar feeling with the NiGHTS pad on the Saturn. The analogue controller allows you to walk or run depending on how much pressure you put on the pad. Strafing left and right is achieved with the shoulder buttons. This is a lot better than using the ordinary pad.



IT'S DOOM AND DOOM 2!

Being a "Special Edition" of Doom, you can expect a smattering of levels from every version of Doom bar the final edition. You begin your destructive quest with levels from the original Doom, before moving on to the more complex environs of Doom 2. The final section of game includes sections of Ultimate Doom - an extention to the original version. There are also some console-specific levels included too.





The levels really get more complicated (and the slowdown gets a lot worse) on the Doom 2 levels. On the PC original series of Doom titles, Doom 2 was by far the best game - even better than the latter release, Final Doom.





When in 1993, id software unleashed what was to become a global phenomenum. Doom was the name of the game that sold more 486 PCs than anything else. Combining awesome first person perspective graphics with ultraviolent gameplay and the fair old smattering of blood, Doom was a gaming revelation that all others tried to copy. Only Duke Nukem 3D (arguably) surpassed it, and by that time, id had Quake just about ready for release.

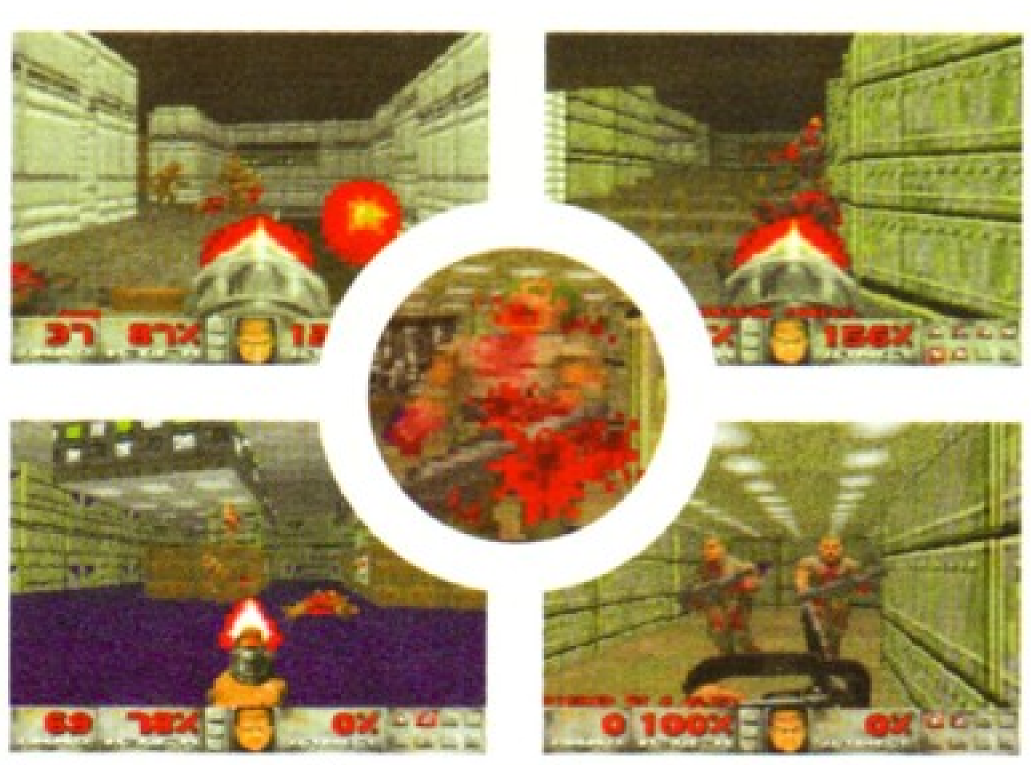


The Saturn has been hideously overlooked when it came to converting id's classic. Only now has a version become available after months of development... getting on for THREE YEARS after the PC original was first released! It's about flipping time really. isn't it?

The good news is that this Saturn game is a conversion of every PC Doom variant released to date (bar the last word, Final Doom). That means you get a smattering of levels from all versions along with the Doom 2 engine, which includes the Super Shotgun weapon, which was only in the sequel.

Otherwise, it's business as usual in the Doom universe. You're the lone marine caught on Mars when the demons of Hell decide to invade Earth. Curiously, you're the only guy available for duty (unless you manage to get hold of a link-up cable and pay it in Cooperative Mode with your mate). Using a variety of weapons, it's your job to basically gun down everything in sight, finding keys to open doors and solving cunning puzzles (although there's not really

A whole three years after the original PC release, there's finally a Doom conversion for the Saturn.



Death, carnage and the prospect of more death. That's Doom.



This bit's from the first Doom and was one of the original levels first released as shareware.



A blood-red haze envelopes you when you get hit hard.



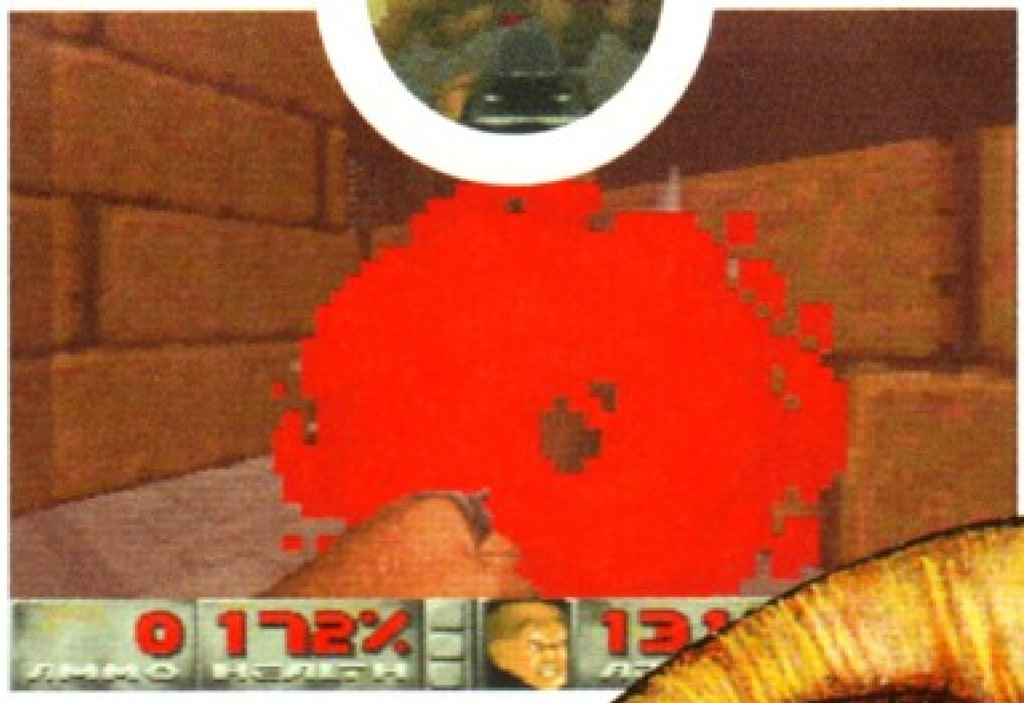
A bunch of imps suffer some shotgun terror.











The berserker power-pack gives your punches a great deal more strength.

much of the latter). Doom is getting on a bit now and the whole scenario is becoming something of a cliche.

The question is how good is the conversion? Well, every aspect of Doom that was in the PlayStation version (bar the special lighting effects) is included and everything looks pretty cool. The only problem is that Rage Software appear unable to get the game moving up to the sort of smoothness and fluidity you'd expect - any one expecting a game as smooth or as good-looking as Exhumed is in for a bitter disappointment. All eyes are on Rage Software now to deliver the goods. If the final version of Doom doesn't cut the mustard, we suspect that gamers across the country will be rightly outraged and demand that Rage never touch a grade A product like this again. Still, we like to think we're optimistic types, so maybe Rage will be able to get the game up to speed - stick with SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE for the full review in the next couple of months.



The double-barrel shotgun destroys all!

READ THE REVIEW BEFORE BUYING

At the time of writing, Saturn Doom includes all of the gameplay of the PlayStation version but looks more like the PC original - although it's lacking a lot of the finer detail of the very first version (a fault of every console version ever including id's own Jaguar version). The big problem with the game is the speed - it's extremely jerky at the moment and this ruins a lot of Doom's timeless playability. It could go either way: if the game speeds up to immensely, it could be excellent. However, we urge you to read the review before you part with your money because fluidity in a game like Doom is all-important, believe us.





One of those semi-invisible meanies.



Artwork © Simon Bisley

EERIE...

Saturn Doom features all of the audio tweaks made by Williams when they converted the game onto the PlayStation. Each level features a weird, eerie, ambient soundtrack which lends a great atmosphere to the proceedings. The sound effects have been remixed from the PC original too, with a great new shotgun noise being the most noticeable change. But to be honest, it's the music that puts this ahead (aurally) of the PC version (which is still the best version coincidentally).



DIE HARD TRILOGY

By the time you read this PlayStation Die Hard Trilogy will finally be on the shelves, with the much vaunted Saturn version literally weeks behind. January 24th. That's when it'll be out. Honest.

BY	FOX INTERACTIVE
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	VARIOUS
RELEASE	JANUARY



Die Hard - John McClane, with a full head of hair, raises hell in Nakatomi Plaza.



Die Harder - Virtua Cop-style gun action in the departure lounge of LAX.



Die Hard: With A Vengeance - tour the telephone kiosks of Noo Yawk Siddy.

YIPPEE KAIYAY!

That John McClane is a bit of a foul-mouthed person. After all, how many people has he despatched to Hades with the inimitable cry of "Yippee Kaiyay Mother******"?. Well, this being videogames land, things are a bit more sanitised. So there's not mother******, essentially. Such witticisms as "Now I have a machine gun" are also present (although he actually wrote that, rather than said it). Still, the voice employed is pretty similar to Mr Bruce Willis, if a tad muffled.



As it is, this is the first we've seen of the Saturn version of Die Hard Trilogy. Originally we thought that the game might not even make it. But it has. And here it is. About time really. Still onto the game.

As you should probably know by now, Die Hard Trilogy is actually three games in one - a Thrillogy, if you will. The first Die Hard is a kind of Loaded/ Fade to Black style shooter based in the futuristic skyscraper that is the Nakatomi Plaza. As you might imagine, there's plenty of Beretta, grenade and Uzi action - just like the film in fact. This is actually a pretty cool game in its own right.

Die Hard 2: Die Harder takes John McClane into Virtua Cop territory. Now a lot of the PlayStation mags have been going on about how this is supposedly "superior" and more "intelligent" than Virtua Cop. Well, wake up and smell the coffee guys, it just ain't even in the same league. At all. However, it remains pretty good fun as McClane traverses LAX airport gunning terrorists down like stinking pigs.

But hey - this is a trilogy - which means that there's obviously a third game to look to. This is in fact Die Hard with a Vengeance. Or at least a bit of it (the film). Specifically the bit where McClane commandeers a taxi and drives around New York in search of a bomb. Only in the game there is more than just one task for McClane to perform. Again, this is pretty cool - the action is fast and pretty frenetic and the gameplay is most enjoyable. If you fancy the idea of running people down but don't like the real life implications (prison, loss of license, guilty conscience), this is the game for you.

Of course, if you have seen the PlayStation version, the question you'll be asking now is - just how close is the Saturn translation. Well, as far as we can see, it's pretty nigh-on identical. Certainly, the gameplay remains identical. The other question is, of course, is it any good? Well, obviously since this is a preview, we can't really say. Yet. That's not to say that the full weight of our reviewing prowess won't be brought to bear next issue. Because it will. Oh yes. Until then, look at these pictures and tremble.

Die Hard Trilogy is actually three games in one - a Thrillogy, if you will.



Make those terrorists pay for their crimes - not with trial by jury, but with a grenade in the teeth! They're asking for it.



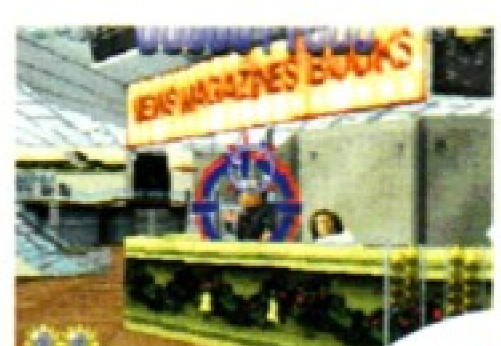
A luxury office building that's destined for destruction.



An aeroplane that's destined for destruction.



Vile robbers! You must all die!



No FT? No mercy!



Help John McClane bring safety to the streets of NY. Yes.



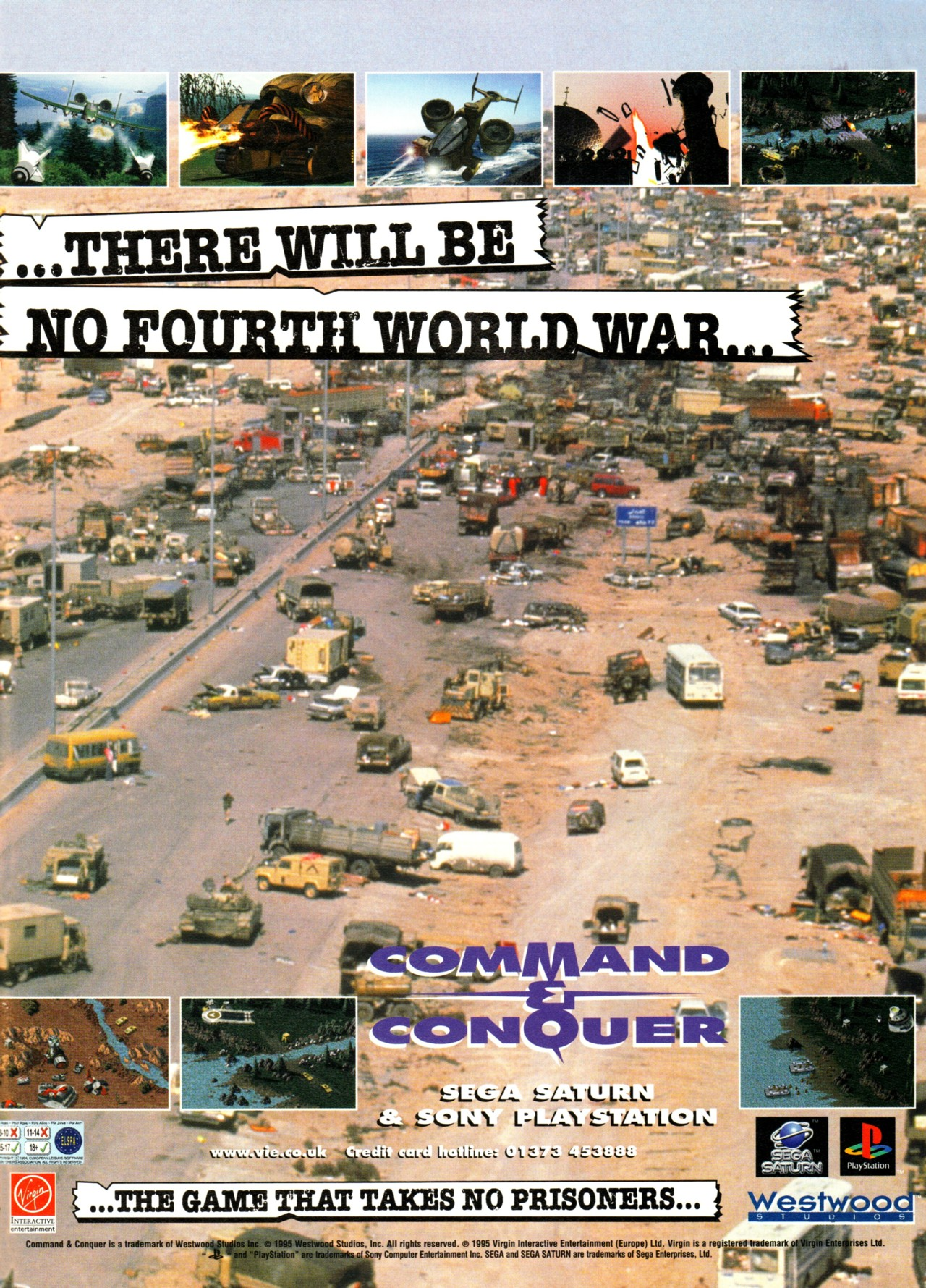
The hostages flee at the sight of John's filthy vest.



Nakatomi elevator action ahoy!



Find the bomb car in part 3.



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PREVIEW

DARK SAVIOR

After what seems like millenia of waiting, we can now reveal an almost totally complete version of Dark Savior, which should be on the shelves by February at the latest! Hurrah!

BY	CLIMAX
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	ACTION ADVENTURE
RELEASE	END OF JANUARY

THE PARALLEL SYSTEM

In case you missed the Coming Soon, Dark Savior is quite amazing in its Parallel Scenario system. At the beginning of the game you're trapped on a ship and how you handle this situation dictates which "parallel", or storyline you follow. There are five in total, and each parallel can differ depending on your actions during the game. Apparently there are well over 100 different endings...



Some nice greenery here.



Locate the hidden door.

EAGLE-EYED

In Dark Savior, you are cast as Garian - a bounty hunter with seemingly mystical powers which means he always gets his man. Backing him up are a bunch of different-coloured eagle-style characters. Jack is the blue bird who is Garian's constant companion. He does very little bar advancing the plot and saving Garian from plunging into large holes. Kaiser is the black eagle who reports your findings to the main bureau (ie he saves your position) whilst red eagle Regina is native to the island and does little bar swapping chocolate for points.









We all know which 32-bit machine has the best role-playing games. You'd have difficult finding two on the PlayStation whilst the Saturn has the likes of Mystaria, Shining Wisdom, Story of Thor 2 and now... Dark Savior. If you haven't been following the coverage in the mag, all you need to know is that this game is by Climax - the people responsible for the legendary Landstalker on Megadrive.

When you first boot up the game you can see the Landstalker influence. For the most part, the game is viewed in isometric 3D, although because the surroundings are made up of textured polygons, you can look around and twist the perspective to get a good view of everything. That's the other difference with Dark Savior. Not only does it look 3D, it truly is. That means some huge levels with an amazing degree of height (you can climb a tower and look down at the surroundings for example).

Having completed one of the game scenarios when the game came up out in Japan, we can safely say that Dark Savior really does benefit from the English translation - the story is very deep and involved, which is just what you'd expect from an RPG, really.

What we have noticed is some changes. The hero Ryu-Ya is now called Garian with his main villain called Bilan (changed from the rather obvious "Villain"). Also, cigarettes (used to bribe prison inmates) have been changed to chocolate! Another amusing change is the Japanese character Seagal, who now

From the creators of Landstalker, an awesome RPG adventure of truly epic proportions!



Garian's being pursued down the stairs by a large boulder.



Your blue eagle friend locates the torture chamber. Lovely.

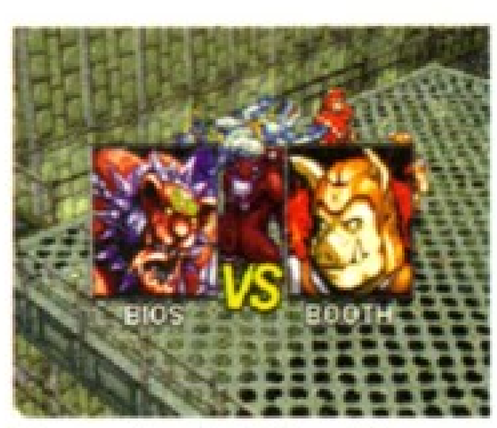


One of the tricky 3D platform tests pictured above.

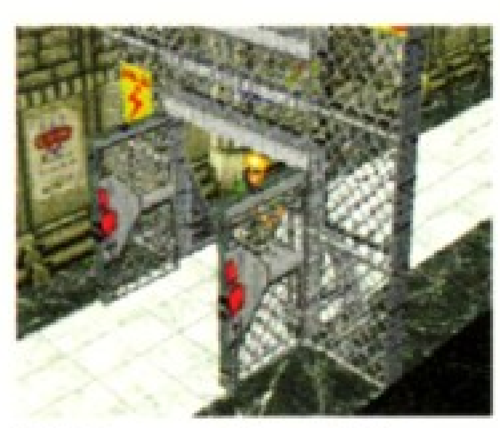




Garian spies a young girl just about to fall into the deadly liquid Bilanium.



Possessing first boss Bios, Garian is challenged by Booth and his two buddies.



What you can't see is the huge wall of spikes slowly creeping up behind Garian.





Beating up the Steven Seagal lookalike (above).



Using the Hyperion View to gauge your next move...



Great plotlines and stunning polygon 3D backgrounds make Dark Savior one of the most eagerly awaited Sega Saturn releases for ages!

becomes Lance (three guesses which action "hero" he looks like?). Also, a Friday 13th Jason-style character has had the eye-holes taken out of his hockey mask - how he manages to see when he attacks you is beyond us! This is all pretty unimportant stuff though and certainly doesn't ruin any enjoyment of the actual game. It's just a bit odd sometimes.

All in all though, we would pretty much go with the view that Dark Savior is the RPG of choice for all Saturn owners. Although the puzzles are pretty simple on the first parallel, things get very tough later on and the innovative multiple scenario system means that if you don't get weeks and weeks of enjoyment out of this game, there's obviously something wrong with you.

As you might suspect, Dark Savior is very quickly coming up for the full review and showcase treatment. In fact, a PAL version should be materialising in SSM HQ just as you get to read this. Expect some very excellent coverage in the next issue!

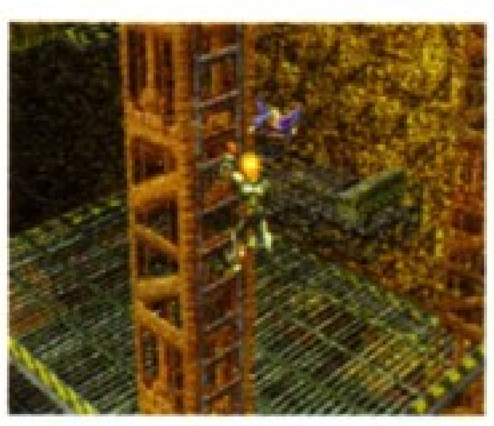






Battling Booth, a player-controlled Bios lays into the hapless monster with a massive claw to the features! With a health level of 80, Bios is clearly making progress in beating down the energy bar of his opponent.





Some of the stages stretch up right to the skies!



Here, Garian has to carry the body of a creature called Drizzit back to his HQ.

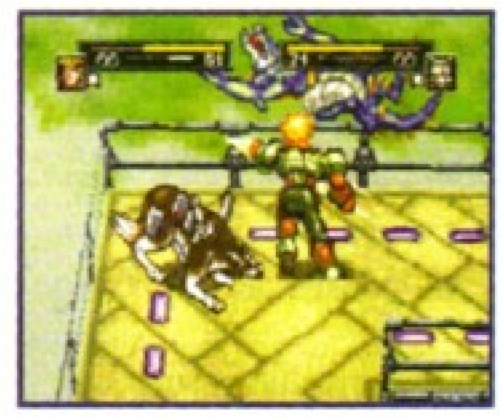
ANALOGUE POWER!

The NiGHTS joypad is quickly becoming the essential tool for almost all Saturn titles (bar fighting ones, where the ordinary pads are best). Dark Savior uses the pad really well. The directional pad and buttons work exactly as they do with the ordinary pad. However, the analogue part of the controller is used to control the perspective. There's nothing you can't really do with the ordinary pad, but using the new controller makes life a lot easier and indeed a lot faster in the realms of Dark Savior. So if you haven't bought NiGHTS, do so.

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Fighting is very cool in Dark Savior, kind of like Street Fighter. Sort of. Basically, it's the best of three rounds as you and your opponent battle it out. A range of three or so moves are included per character, including a Super Move you have to charge up. The good thing about Dark Savior is that hero Garian can capture his foes in the last round and "become" them in later battles. This is pretty great early in the game where Garian is pretty weak. However, if you use another character, it appears that you can't capture your opponent. Hmmmm.











This particular character is quite fast on his feet, but suffers greatly at the wrong end of Garian's Super Attack (above left). Dodging out of his way, his freak-faced opponent leaves Garian wide-open to a counter-attack (above right).



letters™

We tried to find some appropriate and tasteful way to mourn the passage of erstwhile missive-meister, Radion Automatic, into the sinister realm of music journalism. But then it occurred to us that, while we slaved over baking consoles with only Terence Piper Hot Liquids to sustain us, he was probably off in Monte Carlo scooping the froth off a cappuccino with Louise while they re-enacted the video for 'Naked' but with less clothing. Maybe. So we thought stuff him, the spawny, successful, highly-respected, well-paid, jet-setting get. Still, why not write to THE NO-LONGER-AUTOMATIC BUT MANUALLY-OPERATED MAILBAG, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

WRESTLING' WITH THE TRUTH!

Dear Sega Saturn Mag,

I have been a fan of Sega for some time now, but not nearly as long as I've been a fan of the phenomenon that is the World Wrestling Federation and am very annoyed when your mag and that other mag persist to trash it very time you review it.

Making remarks like how depressing it is and how it's a load of garbage packed with leotard-wearing, fat, muscle-head pansies. If that's the case why is the WWF mag selling more than the SS mag, and also is on a world-wide basis more popular than Sega and Nintendo. I bet you wouldn't say that crap to their faces. At least they get out and meet people unlike you computer nerds stuck in all day gawking at a TV monitor.

Do any of you get women throwing themselves at you or get cheered for every day? I don't think so.

The WWF will be here long after Sega reaches its demise.

Wrestling is an art. It's in our blood way before Jesus Christ, back when man began. The video game is okay but has little passion to it, and also may I remind you sir that your crown jewel, a certain VIRTUA FIGHTER, bases all its moves on wrestling. I don't care if their official style is Karate or ninjitsu or whatever. Each and every one of the fighters uses wrestling and to prove it the move known as the Frankensteiner from Wolf was named that by the WWF and its real name is the Hurracarana (sic) so Sega must have done research on WWF to get moves.

So when you play VF you're basically playing a wrestling game, so there.

Laura White and Steve Lenord, London, E3

Worshipping superficial and out-dated media crazes can be fun, can't it? Judging by your letter, Laura and Steve, the time has come for you to start that secret cult you've always talked about. Remember, though, that aggressive recruitment practices may result in potentially harmful publicity, and certain ritual sacrifices are still considered illegal in this country - check with your local Citizen's Advice Bureau for further details. Lots of luck!

TWO FINGERS...

Dear SSM,

We are writing in about the recent Nights comp.

Five major points that really pissed us off:

1. We had to play the game with a standard Saturn 1 joypad and even though everyone protested they wouldn't let it be changed. The cheeky gits even ridiculed the Saturn by saying that all us lot thought its joypad was pants.
2. The rules were changed several times as the hosts were obviously unfamiliar with the Saturn and Nights as no-one had a clue how to decide the competition.
3. After all the fuss about the rules it was decided that the player who scored the most links on Frozen Bell within the time limit on screen would win the competition. Ben just-so-happened to whop the pants of everyone's score with an average 109 (the highest on the day with the standard pad) and was then told they were adding an extra round after I thought Ben had won.
4. The competition was now running late and we were in fear that we would miss our train and Ben also had some photographer sticking his lens in his face. To make matters worse all the scores from the first round had been scrapped and Ben messed up and had nothing to show for it at the end of the day.
5. We knew I (Ben) was easily the best on the day overall and should have won as no-one else said they could (continuous) link any other courses throughout the game.

We felt the competition would have been run a lot smoother if someone was there to represent the Saturn comp. I am not that bothered about the prize now as I don't really want to turn into some skin-diving cheesy wuss boy with ten million Twix wrappers stuffed in his cartridge port! But a few games would have been nice! By the way, where were you lot?

Ben Whittington and James Clements

Tcheez! There's just no pleasing some people, eh? And just because you didn't win, probably. Hopefully you won't end up carrying this bitterness to your grave.

OF FUN!

Dear SSM,

Hi it's me, Ben... You know, the one who came third in the Emap Images/Twix Junior Gamesplayer Of The Year finals in London. Just writing to say it was a cool even and was great fun, so do it again next year (next time Doubtfire, you won't be so lucky, HAHAHAHAHAHAhaha he he... eah). Oh, and how about a Daytona CCE or a Manx TT time trial competition like the Sega Rally competition you did?

Ben Bratchell, Purley

Well we're glad to see that at least SOMEBODY had a good time at the Twix thing. Who knows just what wonders next year's competition will hold? If any.

JABBERCRACKERS: GOOD OR BAD?

Dear SSM,

As you correctly pointed out in issue 13, fancying games characters like Phil Flipping Furness did is very sad. But I am afraid that games developers are not exactly trying to prevent this horrific crime by making women characters a little too appealing.

For example that lass out of Tomb Raider. Now I don't want to get tasteless here but don't you think her breasts are a little too big? I mean how is she supposed to do her athletic activities in the game with them on her chest?

I could name a few more but you'll know what I mean. Even that other lass that was mentioned in that letter, Candy, she looks a bit outrageous and like that lass in Tomb Raider, a little too appealing.

Now please don't tell me that I am sad for noticing the features of that lass in Tomb Raider or anything like



Female videogame characters - and more specifically their jabbercrackers - return to haunt our letters page.

that because they're not that hard to miss.
Please print this letter, even if it has the word 'breasts' in it. I am sure you're allowed to talk sensibly about such things without getting tasteless which I hope this letter hasn't become.

James A. Thompson, Hull

If you're worried about it, James, try to think of it like this: if game producers didn't emphasise the secondary sexual characteristics of their female characters and stuck to realistic proportions, the relatively crude definition allowed by vector graphics would make them all look like blokes with big pecs. And where would the fun be then, eh? Anyway, James, the very fact that you wrote this letter indicates that you are less concerned about the sexual equality of women than you are about looking at their breasts. So, in fact, you are sad.

I DON'T LIKE TO COMPLAIN, BUT...

Dear SSM,

I'm having doubts on the future of my Sega Saturn. Before I bought my Saturn last June, I really had a tough time to make up my mind on which console to get, PlayStation or Saturn. The reasons for my decision were that I always believed Sega is the company who knows how to make innovative games, eg NiGHTS! They are also the leaders in arcade games. Therefore, I'm always looking forward to getting all the marvellous arcade conversions from the AM groups which are always exclusively for Saturn.
But now my confidence in Saturn is a bit shaky. Why? When I look at the recent development in arcade conversions for Saturn, I can clearly see the limitations of the machine. It can't handle transparency effects, the resolution is always being cut down to speed up the on-screen action, eg Fighting Vipers, Virtual On, etc. Nobody can doubt that the technology in the arcade is just moving too fast for a home console to catch up with. For instance, I really doubt that VF3 can be converted perfectly - nicely, maybe, but not perfectly.
On the other hand, the PlayStation is in a better position than Saturn. It can handle all the special effects, such as nice explosions and transparency. Though Sony can't produce their own arcade masterpieces they always have all the best original home video games, eg. Resident Evil, Fade to Black, Formula One, WipEout 2097 and Crash Bandicoot! I think it is because the console is more powerful and more popular among the developers, therefore, PlayStation always gets the 'first-hand' products, then we Saturn owners have all the crappy, secondary products - same games but poorer quality and graphics! I am frustrated about the whole situation!
I am a Sega fan and I really believe in the potential of Saturn, but I'm now really starting to think maybe I should sell my Saturn and get a PlayStation instead. How sad it is for me to think in that way. That's why I'm writing to you guys who are the top Saturn supporters and yet impartial to give me your sincere opinions. Please convince me one more time before it's too late.

Mikey T

Well, yeah, Mikey. But you may be getting a bit carried away here. Though more PlayStation titles are coming out every month, it's not as if every one of them is an unstoppable sex machine of a game. In fact those you've named, good though they are, are the best releases of the past several months. If you think about it there have probably been just as many really good Saturn games released over the same period. What about NiGHTS, Daytona CCE, Virtua Cop 2, Street Fighter Alpha 2, Fighting Vipers, Tomb Raider and Sega Worldwide Soccer?
Just because the PlayStation can handle a few more graphical effects doesn't mean the Saturn is doomed. If you're worried about the quality of Saturn Virtua Fighter 3 just remember that (a) AM2 are hardly likely to disappoint with a conversion of their own game, and (b) you will only be able to play this game on the Saturn.

I ALSO DON'T LIKE TO COMPLAIN, BUT...

Dear SSM,

I have a rather serious point that other readers may possibly agree with. I am seriously considering buying a PlayStation. Yes you read it correctly. I have gradually come to this decision on the basis that the PlayStation appears to have a much greater selection of games available (also partly due to the many third party software companies producing for the machine). Games such as Formula 1, Resident Evil, Tunnel B1. These games are brilliant. And don't give me the "but the Saturn is more powerful" routine again as that's all very well, but if there aren't enough good games to play on it then what's the point... Okay, everyone knows that the AM departments produce the best games, but that's about it and these games only appear a few times a year. Correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't NiGHTS about the last game produced by Sega? In terms of third party companies, all the titles seem to have previously been PlayStation titles that end up being six months late and pathetic (eg WipEout - too slow; Alien Trilogy - not as well presented and too late; Destruction Derby - enough said). And what about Doom (not knowing at the time of writing whether its even out yet!) - this is old news! Duke Nukem and Quake on the PC are far superior and these have been out for a while now.
Talking of delayed releases, I like Sega's way of admitting that games appear in Japan months before they do here by use of their TV advertisements - "Here in Japan the overhead flick is old news".
I don't like to complain. I think the Saturn is excellent and I am not going to part with it, especially with Virtua Cop 2 and Daytona CCE on the way. But maybe this will help persuade software companies that we devotees can get a little impatient at times.

Chris Nightingale, Luton

And well you should not consider parting with your Saturn! It's true that it can be annoying to see good games appearing on competing systems while the Saturn is going through a dry patch. Some of the third-party titles may not be as good as they ought to be, but bear in mind that there are plenty of Sega-programmed games which are world-beaters within their genres, or at least match up to the best software on any other platform. For example, World-Wide Soccer, which you mention, is currently recognised as the best soccer game around. Though you may be right to say that Doom is getting a bit long in the tooth, you'll no doubt have been pleased to read in last issue that Quake is already being converted to Saturn (all going well). And there's plenty more stuff to look forward to in 1997 - how about Fighting Megamix, Sonic 3D, Virtual On, Manx TT and Hexen? Just keep the faith, baby!



Quake. Coming to Saturn, but still not officially confirmed.

PLAYSTATION PROCTOLOGISTS

Dear SSM,

I was wandering round my local games store a while back when I spotted a Saturn. I decided to have a go and I have to say I was pretty impressed with what I saw, so I'm considering buying one. There's one thing that's got me a little worried however. This kid I know (and don't particularly like) was telling me about his brother's new PlayStation and how it was so great. I mentioned that I was thinking of buying a Saturn and he said I shouldn't because production of Saturn games was going to stop in about a year because Sega could not cope with the competition from Sony. He then droned on about the PlayStation's expandable memory or something or other I don't have a clue about. He said it would be even worse for Sega when the N64 is released. All of this sounds like a load of maggot-infested poop to me. There's no truth behind it is there? If not I will get his brother's PlayStation and personally shove it up his arse for being such a prat.

Anonymous

That sounds like a load of maggot-infested poop to us. If there weren't laws against 'Incitement to Violence' we would happily go along with your playful closing sentiment.

WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WRITING ABOUT THIS MONTH
We want more cover CDs! **Is Psygnosis' F1 coming out for Saturn?** I'm thinking of buying a PlayStation... **Where the hell is Manx TT?** We want more games NOW... **Exhumed is great!** Oh no it isn't! **(Yes it is - Rich)**

Q&A

Another month, another Q+A, hosted as ever by your editor, Richard Leadbetter with able assists on the Sega bits by le fromage grande Mark Maslowicz. This month's mailbag was quite dull actually. Please think of some interesting questions, preferably not involving Psygnosis' Formula One or Manx TT Superbike. Send those extremely courteous and thought-provoking missives on their way to: LET THERE BE NO DOUBTS ABOUT MY SKILLS Q+A, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Once again, please be interesting. I'm dying here.

SPEED AND VIOLENCE ADDICT

Dear SSM,

I am a very proud Sega Saturn owner and am a beat 'em up and driving game addict. So could you please answer my questions? Oh, your mag is brilliant, fantastic etcetera.

1. On your Touring Car feature in issue 13, I noticed Sega Saturn logos in the background of the car select screen. Does this mean that it's planned for a Saturn release?
2. Any news on the conversion of Virtua Fighter 3 on the Saturn? Many people say it can't be done but I amongst many Saturn owners would be disappointed if AM2 didn't even try.
3. When is Marvel Super Heroes due for release and how much will it cost?
4. Why is the Saturn superior to the PlayStation in terms of game quality, yet doing so poor in comparison as far as sales are concerned?
5. Is there much point buying Virtua Fighter Kids if you already own VF2?

Eifion Evans, North Wales

1.The Saturn logos are just for advertising purposes, but it is highly likely that Sega Touring Car Championship will come to Saturn in the latter part of '97 even though it hasn't been officially confirmed yet. 2.Yes, AM2 have confirmed that VF3 will come to Saturn in late '97. Incidentally, Last Bronx has also been announced for next year. 3. Try March 1997... in Japan! I'd say it will be a Summer game for us. 4. This is a question I've often pondered. I (Rich) own both machines, get all the games for free, and I think the Saturn's a lot better. Just about the only game I've played on PS recently and enjoyed has been WipEout 2097. Whereas on Saturn I've had Virtua Cop 2, Daytona CCE, Virtual On, Exhumed... I reckon people just believe the hype too readily. Having said that, that's probably the same reason why huge amounts of people bought Megadrives a few years ago. 5. If you're a rabid AM2 fan, yes. Otherwise, not really.

VIDEO-CD VS LASERDISC

Dear SSM,

Since I purchased the Sega Saturn, I have wanted to buy the MPEG video cartridge. Unfortunately, I haven't seen any of the VideoCDs on sale, only one or two here and there. However, seeing the "Out Now" section in your ace mag, I was led to believe that they're still in production. I would greatly appreciate it therefore if you could tell me where to buy any of the said VideoCDs and if you think it's worth it any way.

Reuben Chambers, Student MMU

Check out a mag like Home Entertainment and you should be able to find truckloads of mail order companies who sell VideoCDs. Failing that, get your ass down to HMV or Virgin MegaStore. For smaller towns, try PlayHouse (used to be Our Price Video). They sell them. As for whether it's worth it, personally, I'd save up any extra ú150 and get a LaserDisc player, but finding discs for that (especially in the UK) is just as hard. I get mine from the States (if you're on the net look at www.ken-cranes.com)

WE ARE NOT ACTUALLY SEGA

Dear SSM,

As you're the hottest games mag around, please answer my questions to put my mind at rest.

1. Could you please tell me what football game I should get - Worldwide Soccer '97 or wait until FIFA '97 comes out.
2. Will Mortal Kombat Trilogy be coming out on the Saturn?
3. Will you ever invent a truck racing game?
4. Are JVC making a Victory Boxing 2?
5. Any chance of bringing out a pool or snooker game?

Lee Davies, County Durham

1. Get WorldWide now. FIFA is going to have to be a supremely radical improvement on the last version to even get near to the Sega effort. 2. Yes, Williams have confirmed it. 3. Probably not me personally, although Gremlin have Hardcore 4x4 (reviewed last issue). 4. Hopefully not. 5. Any chance would be very slim indeed.

ENOUGH SUCKING

To SSM,

You are pure genius, even god-like, amazing, interesting and clever. Anyway, enough sucking up, here are my questions.

1. I know the Saturn doesn't need upgrading to 64-bit, but is it possible?
2. How do you flick up with your heels on SWWS '97?
3. How do you guys get your mag so damn good?

Vincent Stratful, London

1. Did you know that the Super NES was an 8-bit machine (although as capable as a 16-bit one like the Megadrive)? How many bits does not correspond to a machine's power, it's the cleverness of the custom audio-video chips. What I'm saying is that the Saturn could be upgraded with, say, a new video 3D processor and still be superior to N64 despite still being a 32-bit machine. 2. I think you're referring to the heel lift - move in a direction, quickly move in the opposite direction and then move back then press B. 3. It's simple. It's because, like you, we love games, and Saturn games in particular. Couple this with tons of experience in journalism plus taking pride in our work and there you have it.



Worldwide Soccer '97: the best footie game on console.

A DELUDED FOOL WRITES

Dear SSM,

I am a Saturn owner and have Virtua Fighter 2 and personally I don't think it's that good. Most of the special moves involve spinning kicks or punches - boring! It's all graphics and no gameplay. The characters don't have the feel that you know them. For example, Ryu is a fast, smart, hard bloke, but who's Cage - just some ninja that's walked in off the street. I don't know why it got the Game of the Year award.

I would also like to complain about Digitiser. It had Street Fighter Alpha for PlayStation at number 1 and SFA on Saturn at number 7. What's the difference apart from a better loading message on PlayStation? By the way, how do you get Juggernaut on PAL X-Men, because the cheat doesn't work.

I do not want to give my name in case some VF2 fan beats me up, but I live in Aberdeen, Scotland, Earth.

You're talking out of your arse. VF2 is the deepest, most involved combat game ever. All graphics and no gameplay - doh! How much rent do you pay in that dreamworld you live in? Addressing your queries, Juggernaut has been taken out of PAL X-Men. As for Digitiser, it does seem a bit odd. SFA Saturn is superior in every regard - speed, loading time, the whole works. The difference between SFA2 to Saturn and PlayStation is even greater.

SHOOTING QUERIES

Dear SSM,

Please answer these questions for me.

1. How is Die Hard Trilogy shaping up?
2. Will you be able to use the Virtua Cop gun on Die Harder?
3. How many FPS is Virtua Cop 2 running at and how good a conversion from the arcade is it?
4. When will the modem be out?
5. Do you think the price of the Saturn will have come down for Christmas?

Peter Collins, Harpenden, Herts.

1. This month's coverage should sort you out. 2. Indeed. 3. It's running at 30 frames per second and it's an AWESOME conversion. Buy it now. 4.Hopefully around Easter next year. 5. It's not very likely. However, ever major multiple chain store has their own Saturn value pack. We reviewed them all in the last issue.

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SHOWCASE

VIRTUAL INSANITY

Yet another brilliant coin-op conversion blasts on Sega Saturn courtesy of the world renowned AM departments! This time, AM3 deliver the goods with the ultimate robot battler, Virtual On. Join RICHARD LEADBETTER as we jump into the dark future of the Virtual Century!

Earth has descended into a new dark age, with the entire world controlled by giant corporate syndicates that control the media - and thus the thinking of the world's population. Eager to break free, enterprising men and women have broke free from Earth and have sought to colonise new worlds.

Wary of these developments, the syndicates are casting a beady eye over the rapid expansion in the colonies. This observation leads to the discovery of a powerful new technology on a burned out world in the year VC 0084. One of the larger corporations, DN, reverse-engineers the recovered devices and produces stunningly powerful battle robots, named Virtuaroids. Unfortunately, these robots prove to have a mind of their own, becoming increasingly difficult to control.

The DN Syndicate have a plan. Discrete attempts to find human minds compatible with the VRs (so-called VO positive brains) have been put into motion, with arcade machines being created which have direct uplinks to real Virtuaroids at the DN test facilities on the moon.

However, disaster strikes when the central VR CPU housed at the test complex becomes self-aware with universally damaging implications. The central computer has activated the ultimate weapon - the dread Sun Cannon - the bane of the original civilisation that created the VR technology.

There is only one option. Operation Moongate is effected, with VO positive arcade players unwittingly taking part in an operation to use the DN syndicate's Virtuaroids to destroy the central facility. Can you battle your way through the CPU-controlled VRs and destroy the final boss before it reduces Earth to smouldering ruin? One thing's for certain: the cold artificial intelligence behind the rogue Virtuaroids will do everything in its power to stop you.

Virtual On is reviewed on page 66.



The Tongfer-wielding Apharmd puts his special weaponry to work in an awesome CG rendered image from the labs of AM3.





CONTROL FREAK

The control system in the original Virtual On arcade machine is kind of different in that two joysticks are used to control your robotic counterpart. This system isn't new (it was first in the 1980 blaster BattleZone), but the implementation is different. An arcade-perfect representation is available on the Saturn in the form of the AM3 dual-joystick controller, but the chances are that this is not going to be released in the UK. Don't blame us - you can get it on import if you really must have it.



JOYPAD POWER!

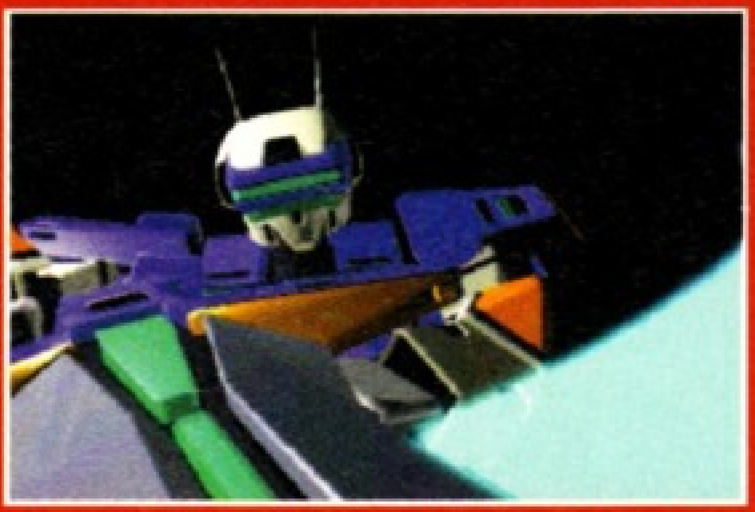
Luckily, the common or garden joypad does the job pretty much as well. The d-pad controls the forward and backwards motions of your robot, with left and right strafing in the appropriate direction. The shoulder buttons on your joypad rotate your combatant left and right, allowing for full freedom of movement.

JUMP AND BOOST

As well as the simple movement controls of the Virtual On Cyber Troopers, there is also the function of jumping or boosting. The former is pretty obvious (although it also boosts some weapons). As you might suspect the latter is used to speed around in a certain direction, but in actual fact, it also supplies extra power to key weapons systems. Also, by pressing a direction button in conjunction with boost and then firing off a weapon, you usually get different results. It's best to experiment here, but in our robot guide you should get some idea of which characters benefit most. Another advantage with the Boost button is that if you've targeted your opponent, you automatically turn to face your opponent when you fire your weapon. This is the key to success.



Introducing the sleek lethal power of Fei-Yen - Virtual On's only "female" VR fighter.



More action from the arcade intro - this time it's Temjin's turn to strut his stuff.





Temjin's bombs can be used as a shield from various forms of weaponry.



Temjin does what he does best – zooming in close and cleaving his foe apart.

VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #1: TEMJIN (MBV-04-G)

Temjin is the Ryu or Ken of the Virtual On battledroids. He's quite fast in terms of speed and mobility, but is lacking in comparison to the heavier Virtuaroids when it comes to armour. Consequently, he takes damage pretty easily. In terms of combat, Temjin is a very good all-round fighter, with decent ranged weapons. However, he can be excessively dangerous in the area of close-quarters combat. A powerful robot, Temjin's only real weakness is his lack of stamina and his very poor performance at air attacks.

BOMB Seemingly quite dull, this weapon has excellent defensive capabilities. The blast takes out all enemy beam projectiles in its radius, but doesn't affect your weaponry. Ergo, you can use it as a shield to launch your own offensive.





BEAM RIFLE Fires off a single beam pulse if used on its own. Boosting sideways fires off four bolts, which aren't very strong. Recovery time on boosting attacks with this weapon are most unimpressive. In a forward boosting scenario, Temjin fires two more powerful bursts.





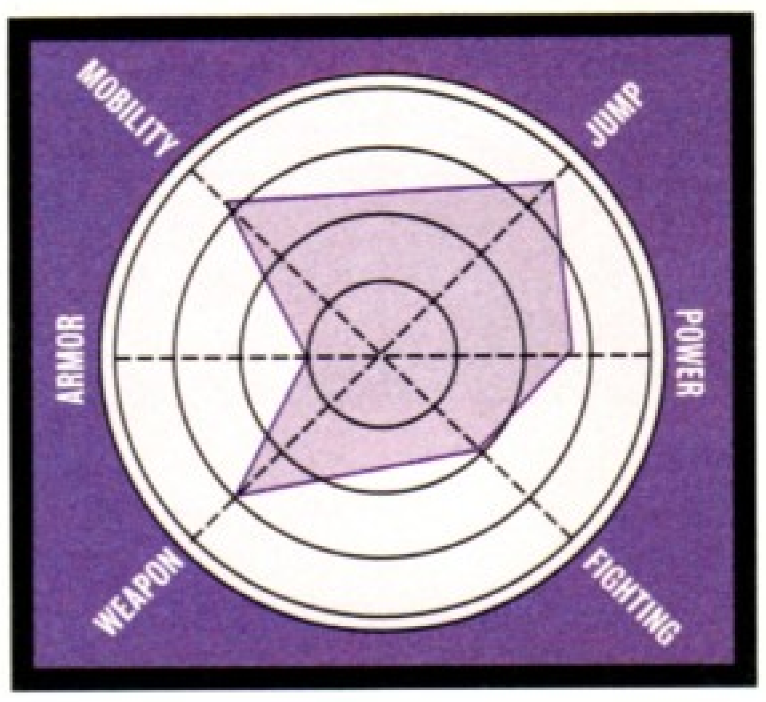
BEAM SWORD At long range, homing beam cutters are fired at your opponent. However, the Beam Sword is extremely powerful at close range and has a very short recovery time, making it the weapon of choice if you're particularly adept at getting close.



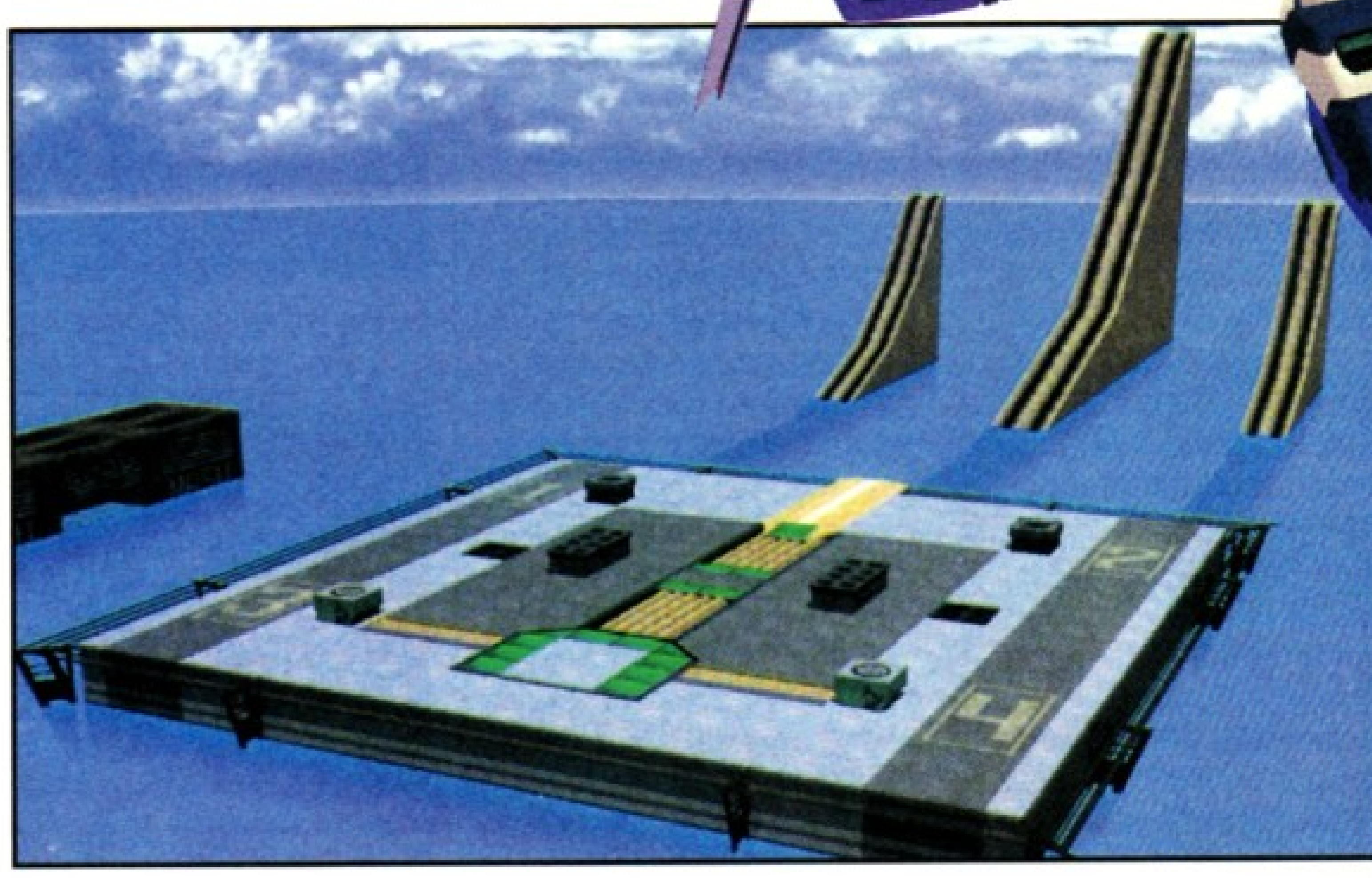




Temjin is an excellent close-quarters combatant thanks to the power of his Beam Sword.

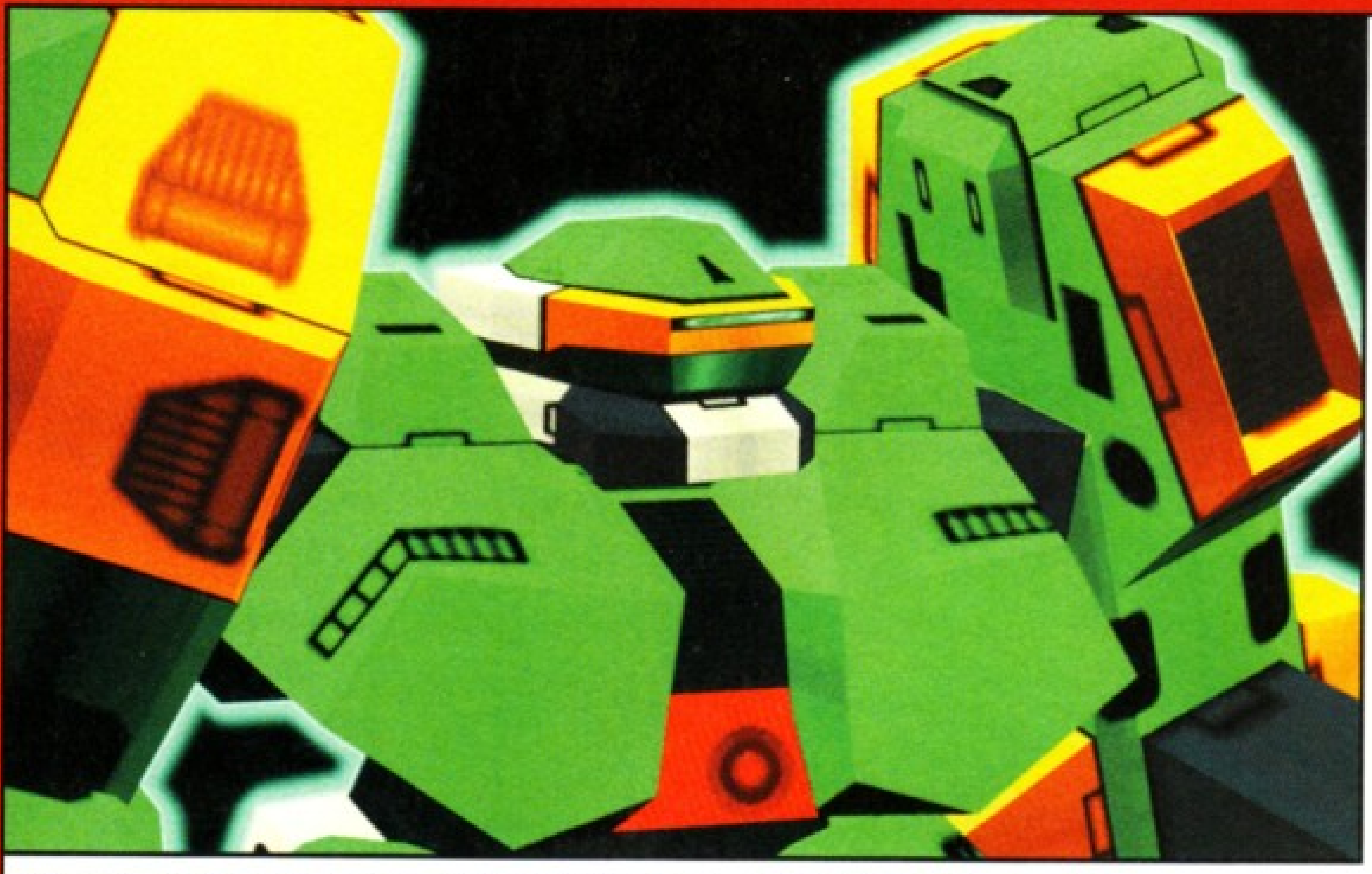






STAGE: FLOODED CITY

An entire metropolis has been submerged underwater, with only five concrete towers protruding from the ocean. On the largest of these towers you'll find the battle arena. There are three buildings on either end of the tower, but really this is the closest you'll get to an open area, making this a good practise battle site.





Dorkas's fireball attacks can be used in a variety of situations.



Boosting produces different results when used with your various weapons.

VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #2: DORKAS (HVB-10-B)

Dorkas may not be the most mobile of Virtuaroids, but he is certainly the most sturdy short of some of the boss robots in the game. A vast, heavily armoured fortress of a 'roid, Dorkas specialises in bombarding his opponents with a near constant barrage of high-yield explosives. His near slow-motion activities can make him a bit of a sitting duck, and his boost capabilities are short-lived (he's also rubbish at air attacks), but the sheer power at Dorkas' disposal, coupled with the vast range of boost weapons options make him a very good character.

HAMMER This has huge range, homes in and flies over buildings, effectively nullifying cover. It's also fast enough to use when smashing foes who are recovering after a boost or jump. The various boost options available to the hammer aren't so useful.



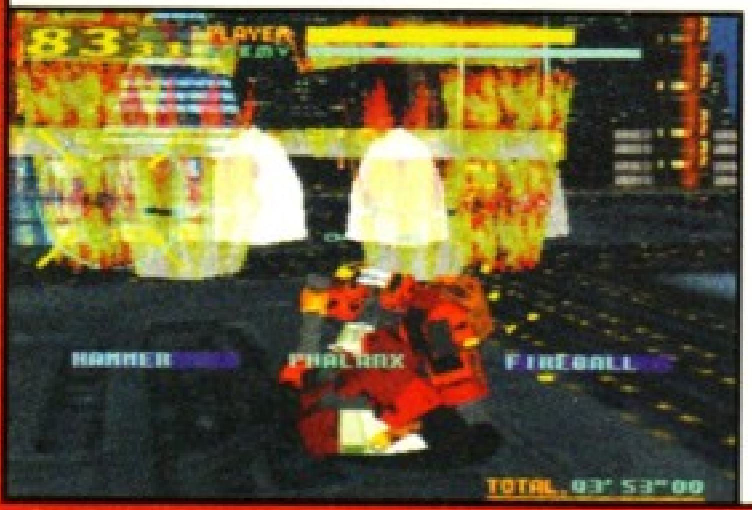


FIREBALL Passes through most enemy fire and also has various boost derivatives. Forward-boost produces an impressive stream of fire. Side and air attacks produce smaller fireballs which are less powerful. To be frank, the air attack is a bit of a joke.

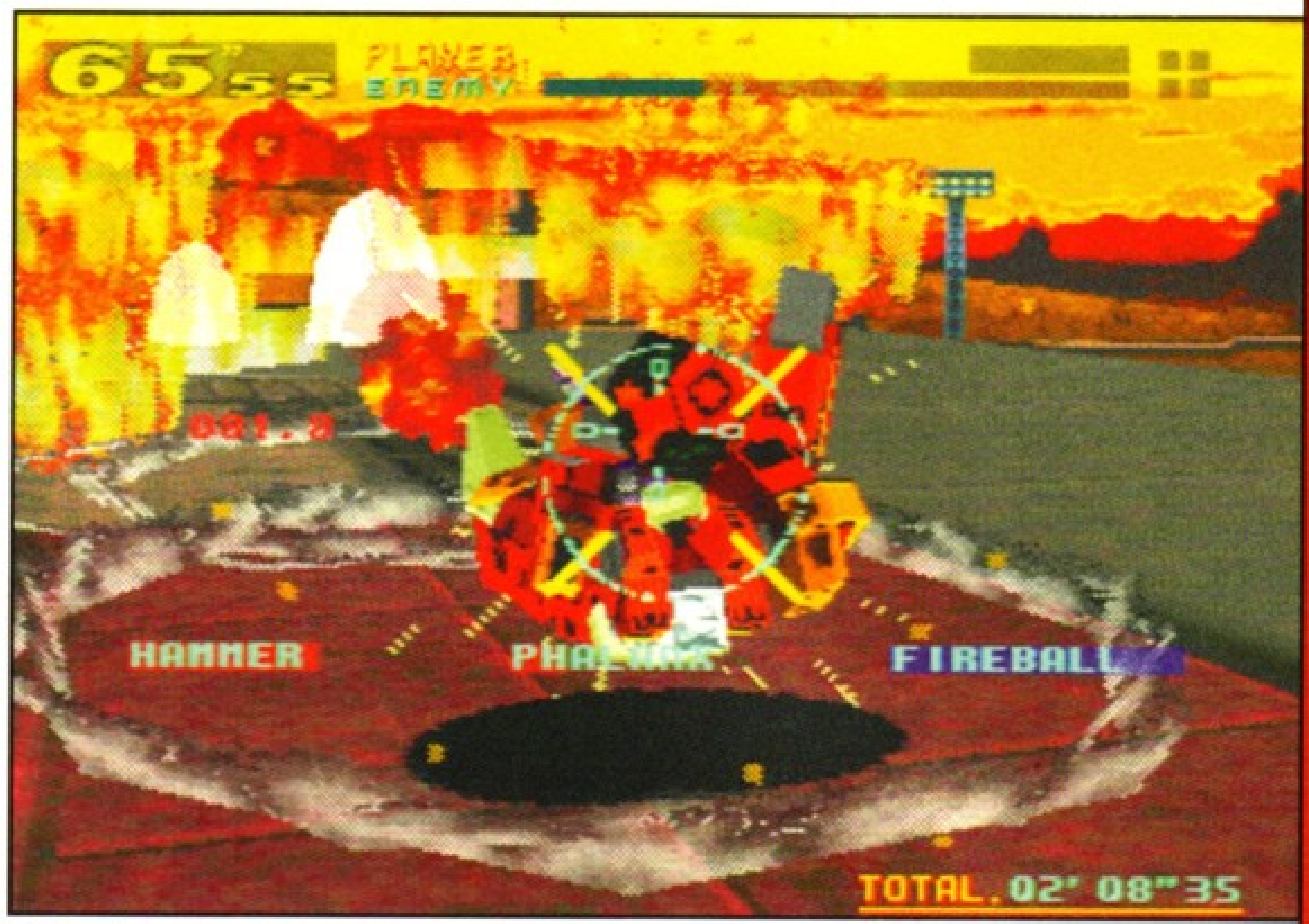




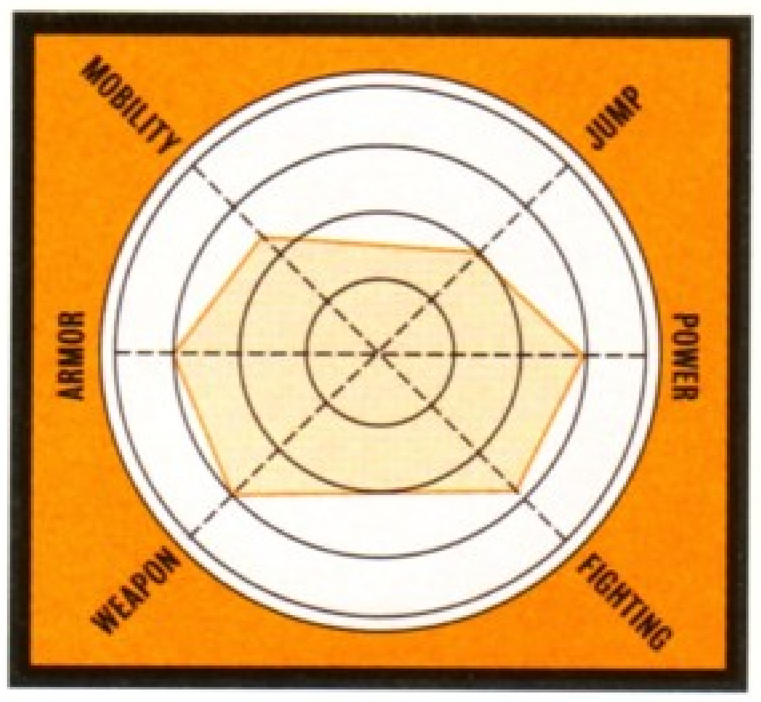
PHALANX A combination of napalm and aerial missiles create a huge series of explosions. A full range of directional boost options are on offer, the best being the crushing forward boost onslaught. Definitely the greatest weapon in Dorkas's armoury.



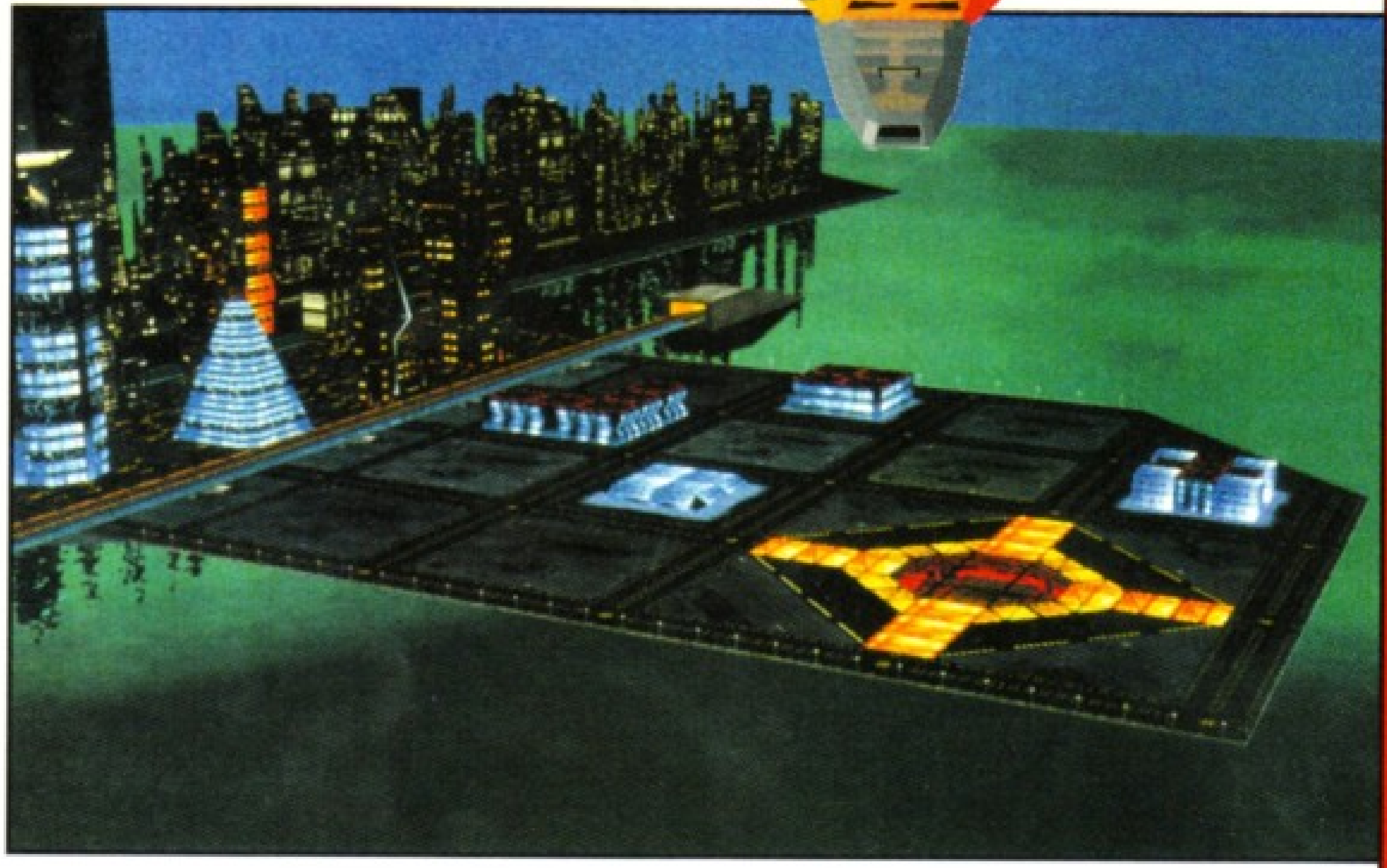




Dorkas is slow but immensely powerful, and his Phalanx attack is simply awesome!

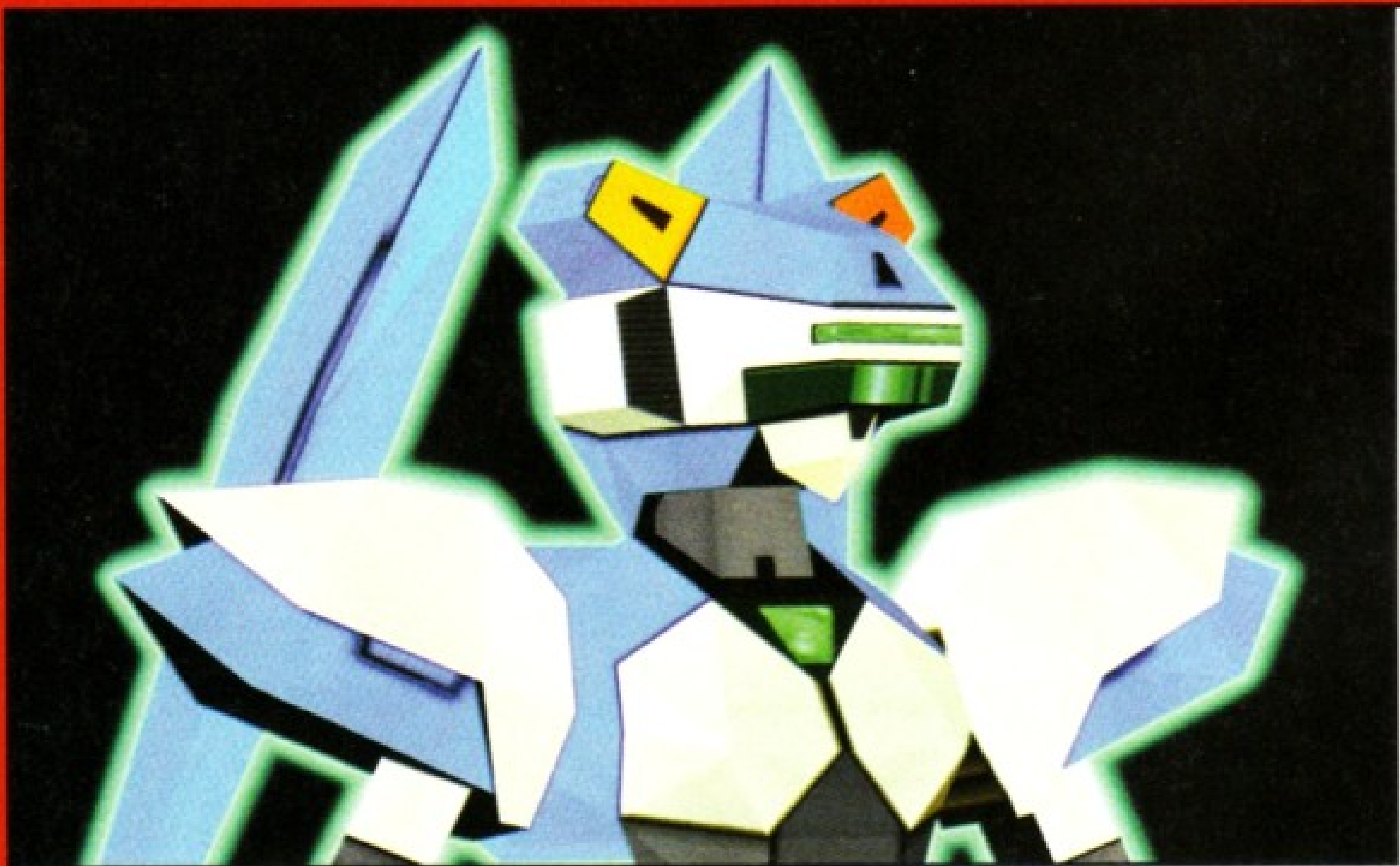






STAGE: WATERFRONT

Dorkas's stage is surrounded on three directions by water alone, with a vast sprawling cityscape stretching into the distance. A mixture of building sizes is on offer, varying your cover. There are also some L-shaped bunkers which provide even more excellent defensive capabilities.





This wide spread of plasma is one of Fei-Yen's excellent Hyper Mode strikes.



This pyrotechnic display means that Fei-Yen has now initiated Hyper Mode attacks.

VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #3: FEI-YEN (SRV-14-A)

Conceivably, Fei-Yen is the only "female" in the Virtuaroids on offer in Virtual On. She's also the fastest fighter in the game, but also the least armoured, meaning that she takes a huge amount of damage compared to the heavy hitters. What is intriguing though is her ability to shift into Hyper Mode. After taking half-damage, she changes colour and all of her weapons are powered up into far superior versions of the basic assault ordinance. Her Heart Beam attack in particular is now capable of some truly horrendous damage.

BOWGUN Probably Fei-Yen's least impressive weapon. This bow fires a single plasma arrow which has a long range (and good recovery time). Boosting produces double the amount of shots. Fairly decent as a back-up.





HANDBEAM Fei-Yen's handbeam is a very versatile weapon. Firing continuous pink plasma bolts, it has numerous boost options which produce a whole stream of highly charged plasma. In Hyper Mode, triple snowflake-style bolts are fired which can't really help but hit your opponent, even just for minor damage.





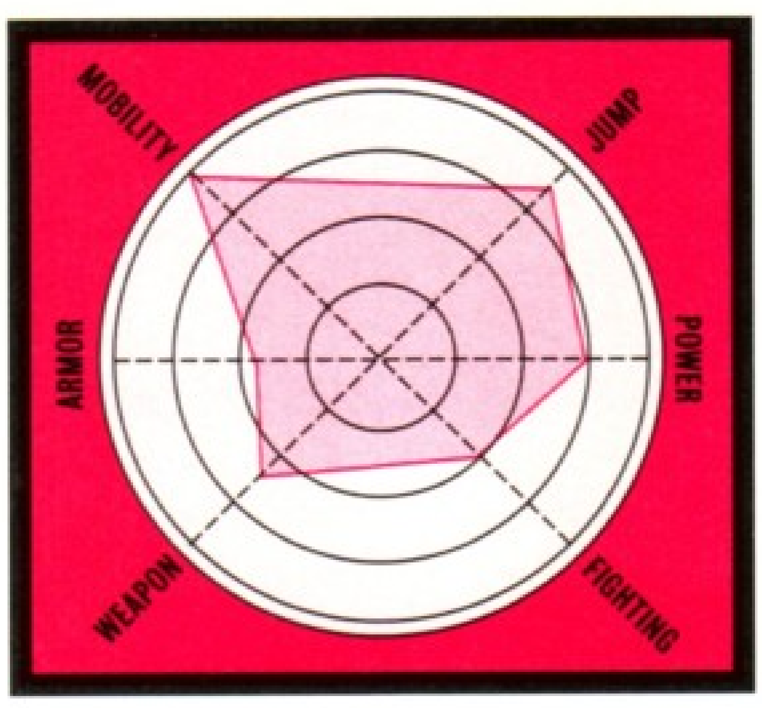
HEART BEAM A very good air attack for Fei-Yen, and notable in its ability to recharge almost instantaneously. This attack really comes into its own when in Hyper Mode, when it knocks down your opponent and inflicts some pretty impressive amounts of damage.



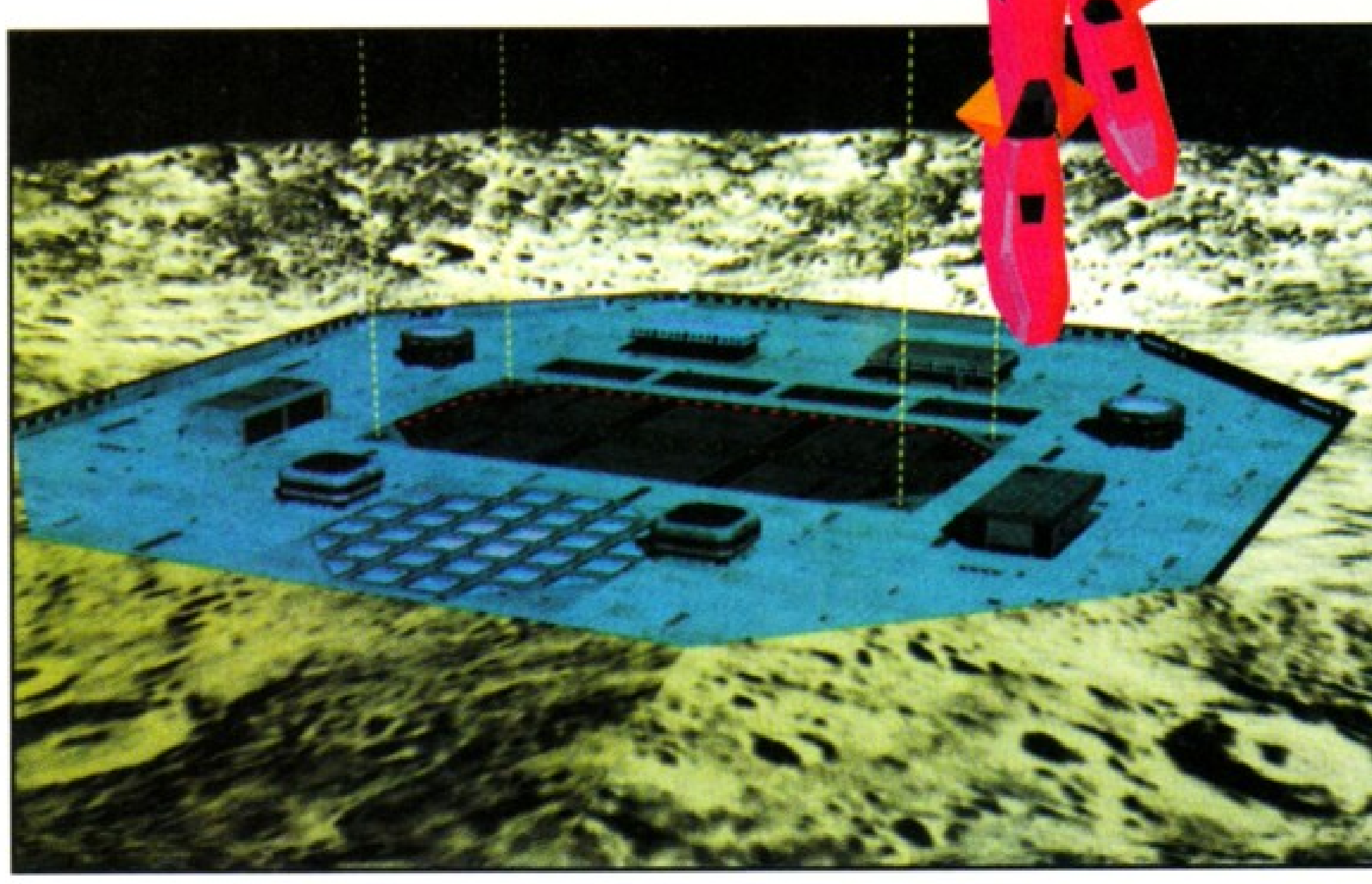




Fei-Yen is an extremely fast, and powerful too, when Hyper Mode kicks in.







STAGE: MOONBASE

A hexagonal battle site based on the surface of the moon (hence the name). Eight buildings surround a central open area, which has four spotlights shining upwards into the skies. Fei-Yen uses this area excellently, her speed enabling her to reach cover with comparative ease.



VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #4: BELGDOR (SRV-07-D)

A long-range attack VR, based on the Raiden exoskeleton, but equipped with an entirely different range of weapons. Although of medium-build, Belgdor's high-yield weaponry makes him a slow Virtuaroid with very unimpressive boost capabilities. He has an attack for just about every occasion and in the right hands he is a dangerous force. The key is in using attack as a good defence, and going forward from there.

NAPALM Napalm is a very powerful tool for Belgdor to use. It strikes opponents even when they're behind cover. It only fires in a straight line (even when used with a boost), so it is best to stick to forward boosting here. The blast radius can be most lethal...





GRENADE The grenades aren't impressive unless used with a boost attack, where Belgdor can release up to five at once (they are sent off in a straight line too - if one hits, others are almost certain to as well). These weapons are pretty much disposable.





MISSILE Belgdor's most powerful weapon. The missile is a deadly threat - you don't even need to be locked on to secure a hit. The forward boost variant of the missile attack almost certainly hits home if the enemy is anywhere in a forward arc in front of you.







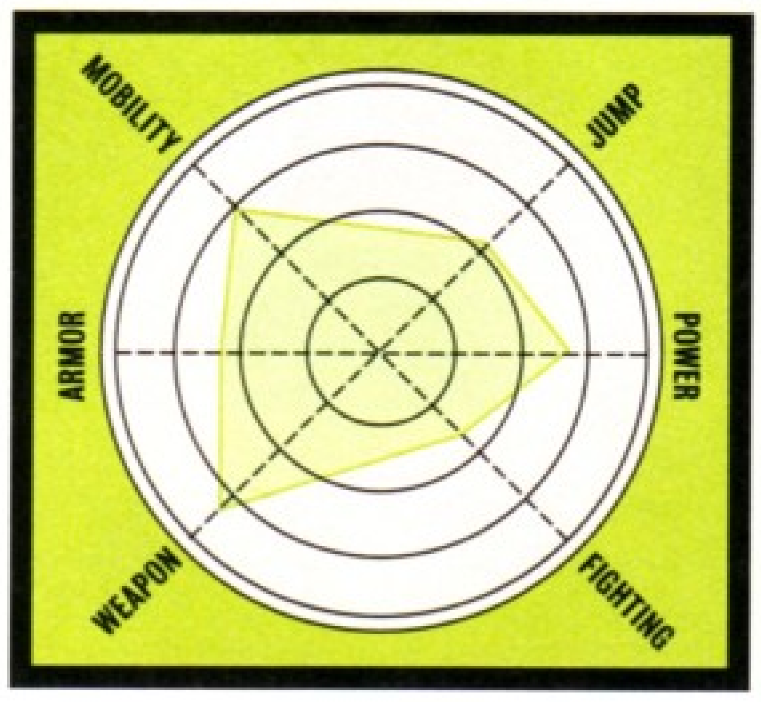
Belgdor's long range missiles are the centrepiece of his attacking arsenal.



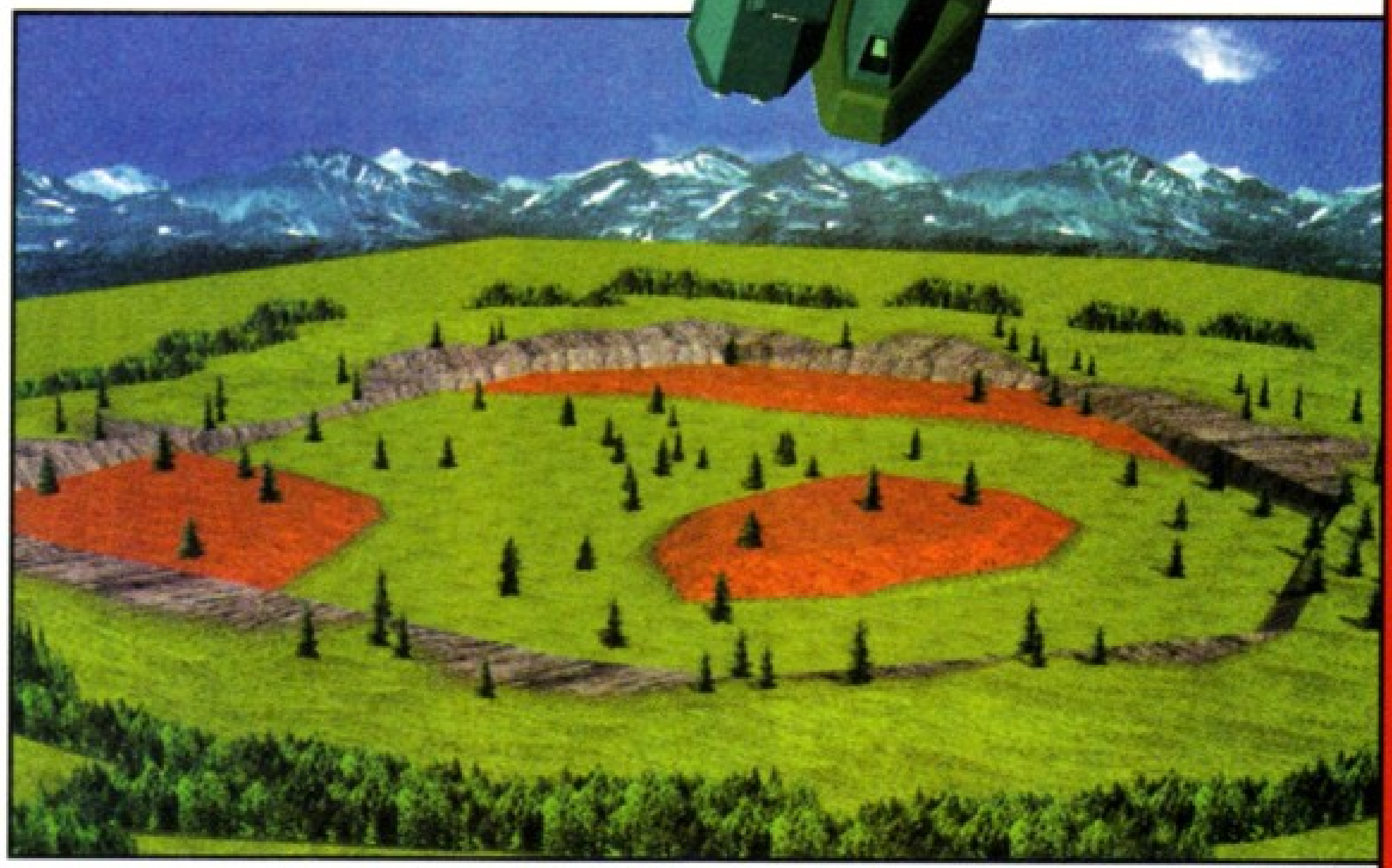
Unleashing projectile terror on a jumping Bal-Bas-Bow (who doesn't stand a chance here).



In close quarters combat, Belgdor does suffer against guys like Temjin and Apharmd.







STAGE: GREEN HILLS

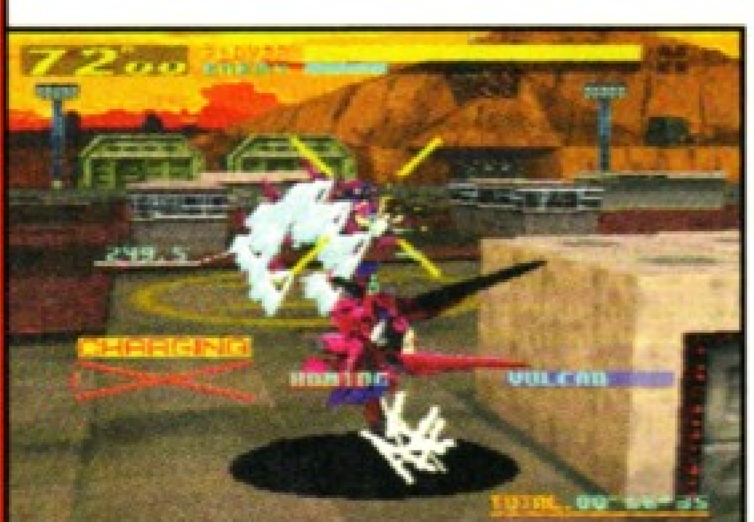
One of the largest battle sites in the game, there is actually very little cover indeed, making this something of an arena for the more powerful characters. The eponymous green hills are of such a height that they block certain weapons, but the real key here is to take the high-ground and use your lock-on to do the rest.



VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #5: VIPER II (TRV-06K-H)

Viper II is a fast, yet fundamentally flawed Virtuaroid. There are no complaints whatsoever about the power of his weapons. The 7-way missiles and the homing beam are immensely powerful in the right hands, with the vulcan being useful for gradually wearing down an opponent's energy. Unfortunately, Viper II's main problem is his propensity to take huge amounts of damage due to his weak armour. Although a character with some potential he is inherently weak.

7W MISSILE 7W stand for seven-way fire! A great weapon at close range, but must be used in concert with the homing beam for long range strikes. Forward boosted 7W is a hugely powerful strike whilst sideways allows you to arc missiles over obstacles.



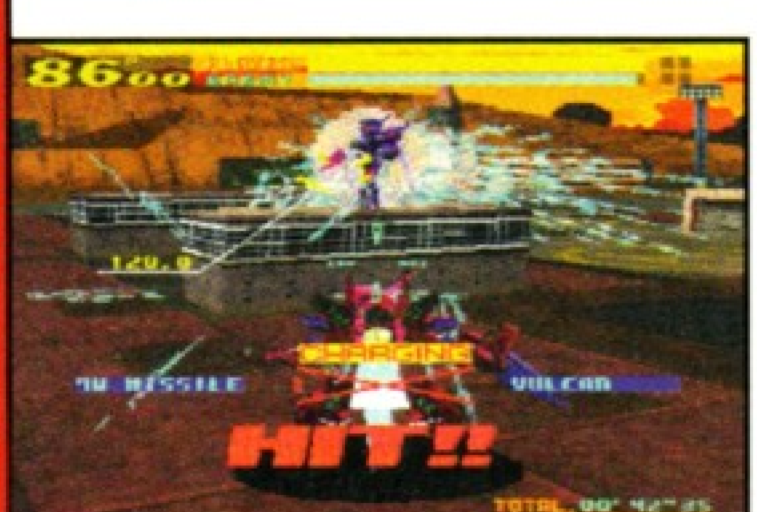


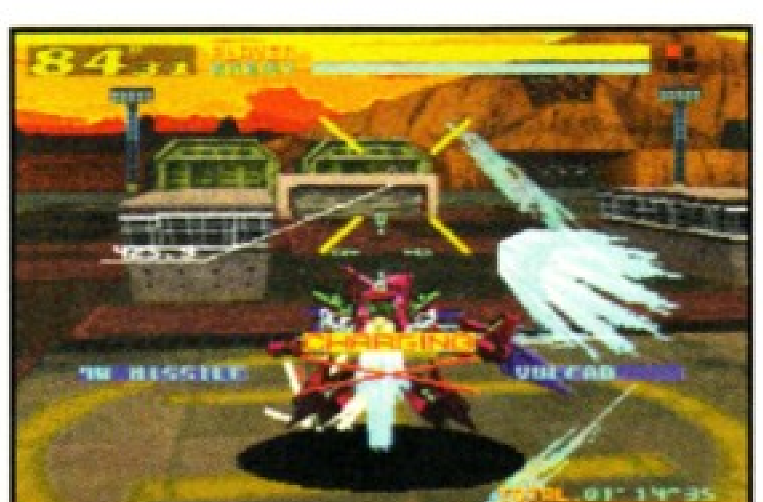
VULCAN Viper II's most irritating weapon. It has a short recharge period so can be used near continuously. When used in a boost scenario, you tend to get multiple streams of firepower no matter which boost direction you chose. More irritating than useful.





HOMING Viper's most powerful tool. Can strike behind obstacles, or can be used with forward/backwards boost in order to remove the arc of the beam's trajectory and thus strike at close range. Fairly fast to recharge, this is Viper's weapon of choice.







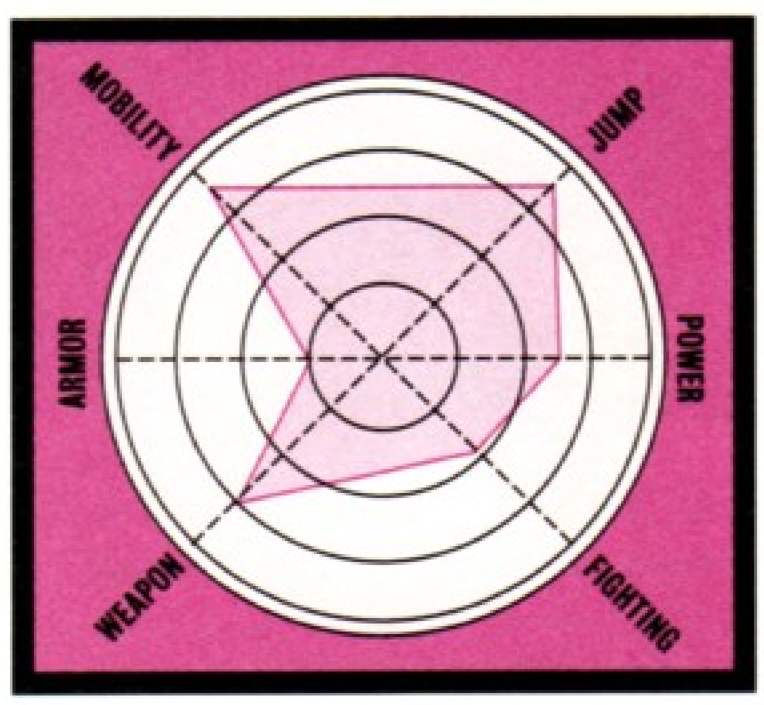
With his Homing Beam and missiles, Viper II is a fast and deadly opponent in a scrap.



As well as looking cool, Viper II also has some of the best victory poses.



Battling Dorkas, Viper II immediately fires off his dreaded Homing Beam!







STAGE: AIRPORT

This disused airport is surprisingly devoid of runways, although there is a helipad. It also happens to be densely packed with buildings of different height towards the centre, with strips of concrete running around the edge. Very definitely a site favoured by the faster Virtuaroids.





As a close-range combatant, Bal-Bas-Bow is adequate but has poor defensive power.



Jump in the air and release your super move to fire off the dread Satellite Laser.

VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #6: BAL-BAS-BOW (XBV-13-t11)

Being large and slow usually means that a Virtuaroid tends to be very resilient to damage. This isn't the case with Bal-Bas-Bow who remains very weak regardless. Individually, his weapons are also quite rubbish, but for the way this 'roid operates they do the job pretty well. His main tactic is to absorb enemy fire with the aid of the ring laser and then retaliate. Bal-Bas-Bow goes down in history as the least popular character in the game, which is as much to do with his preferred tactics as it is to his rather bizarre, porcine appearance.

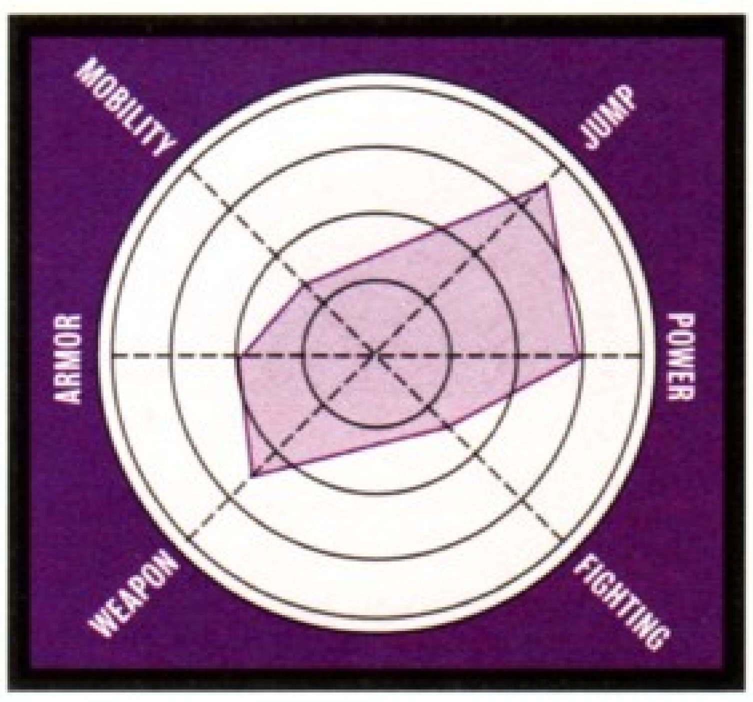


Using the Ring Laser in conjunction with boost floods the area with fire.

F MINE "F" stands for floating! They have a-class homing capabilities and will always hit provided you give them a fairly decent aim to begin with. Boost options provide more mines, but it's best to use solo mines to build pressure.

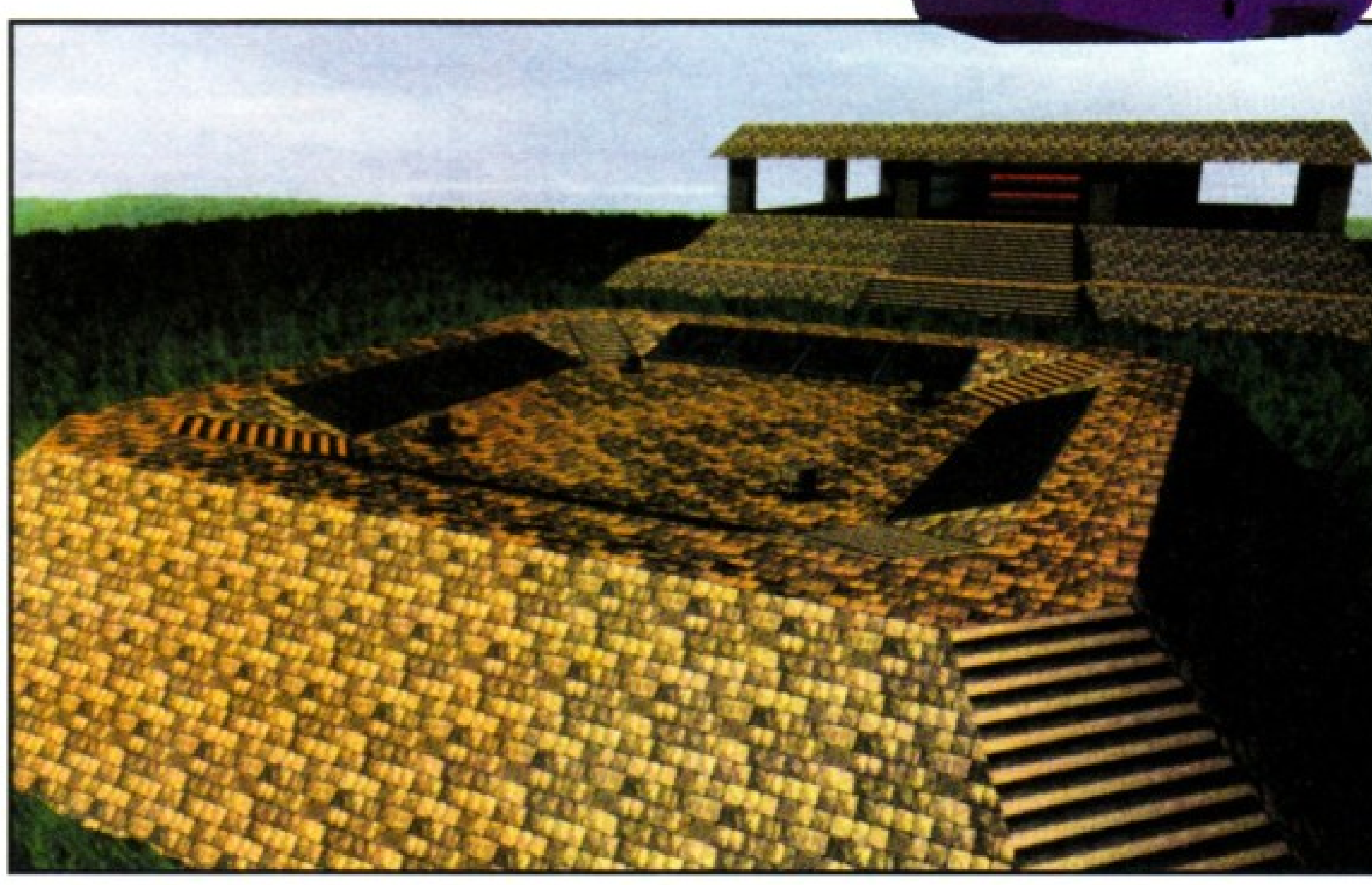








RING LASER Not the most powerful weapon, yet useful nonetheless in that it has the ability to absorb enemy fire. Don't fire it too quickly because it's slow to recharge, so it's best to use this as a defence in conjunction with another weapon (as offense).







HAND BIT BBB's hands fly off to the opponent and open fire. It's not very powerful unless you unleash it whilst in the air. When you do this the full power of the so-called "Satellite-Laser" is invoked - it fires eight powerful beams at your foe and can put a severe dent in any type of armour.





STAGE: RUINS

Although not as large as the Green Hill stage, the Ruins have a great illusion of space, because the centre of the level is completely devoid of any noticeable architecture, bar some small Easter Island style statues. A raised area around the perimeter of the arena is the only noteworthy aspect of this stage.





The Tongfers are engaged and yet another sap-like opponent falls before Apharmd.



Apharmd's advantage is speed, which is great for getting in close and pulping the opposition.

VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #7: APHARMD (MBV-09-C)

Apharmd is character similar in appearance and weaponry to the Virtual On staple character, Temjin. He has a bomb just like Temjim and his plasma sword is similar as well, deploying beam cutters at range and being powerful at close range. However, Apharmd benefits from a more powerful super-attack, with the Tongfer being a most versatile weapon. This character has been made with speed and stamina in mind. Although some of his weapons seem to work a bit strangely, he can still be a most formidable force.

BOMB He can throw these further than Temjin, but overall their use remains the same. Use the blast radius as a shield and fire your own weapons through it. Also, with the boost engaged, the bomb can be lobbed over buildings.





SHOTGUN Like a real shotgun, this is more powerful at close-range and loses power the further away it hits. Boost options give a wider spread, but only the forward boost has any lasting effect, and your foe needs to be pretty much in front of you.





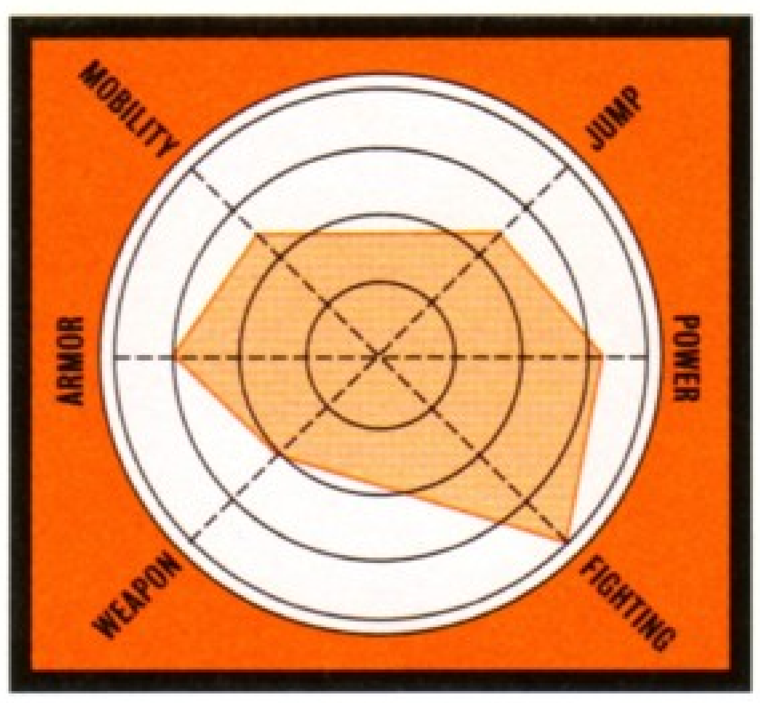
TONGFER Along with Raiden's laser, the Tongfer is excessively powerful. At range it's very weak, a Temjin style Beam Cutter being fired. It's best to use Apharmd's speed to get in close and get in a short-range power strike. Because that's really what he's best at without a shadow of a doubt.



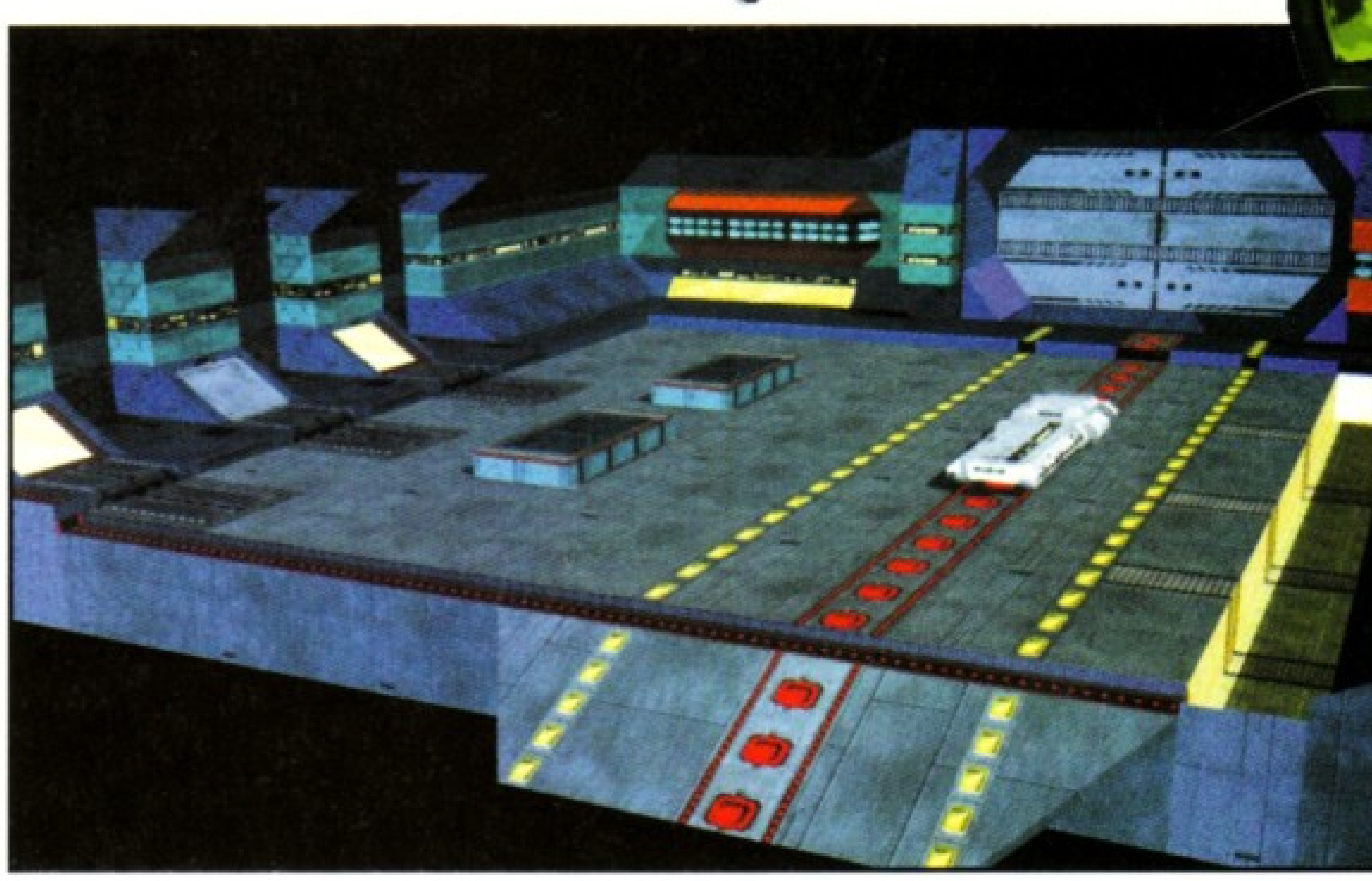




Apharmd strikes at close range and drains off lethal amounts of energy.







STAGE: SPACE DOCK

Being the first area of the game's second phase, you can expect an open, easy to master site and that's exactly what the Space Dock is. The only detail you find is a space cruiser on a runway and a couple of warehouse style buildings on the edge. Again, more of a level favoured by the faster characters needing more space.



VIRTUAROID TECHNICAL READOUT #8: RAIDEN (HVB-05-E)

Raiden is the preferred VR for beginners just getting into Virtual On. Far from being a balanced Virtuaroid, in actual fact he is a powerhouse of destruction! It's possible to massacre most of the CPU opponents by starting every round by firing off your lasers. Most foes don't get out of the way quickly enough. Bye bye 50% of your energy! The bazooka and laser are horrendously powerful, but this is kind of balanced by the very nature of the G Bomb, which is about as useful as a one-legged man in an arse-kicking contest.

G BOMB Two words best sum up the G Bomb and they are "oh" and "dear". Although the blast takes out beam weapons, using it like this is next to impossible. It's best used to create some explosions and put the wind up your enemy a bit.





BAZOOKA Fast, powerful and very quick to recharge, this is Raiden's staple weaponry. Forward boosting provides a devastating onslaught and you get width with a side-boost (although you lose two-thirds of the power with this strike).





LASER It looks awesome, it's supremely damaging and it scares the willies out of anyone who dares challenge the power of Raiden. A standing blast is most powerful, but the homing boost variants are still stronger than most other VRs' super-attacks.







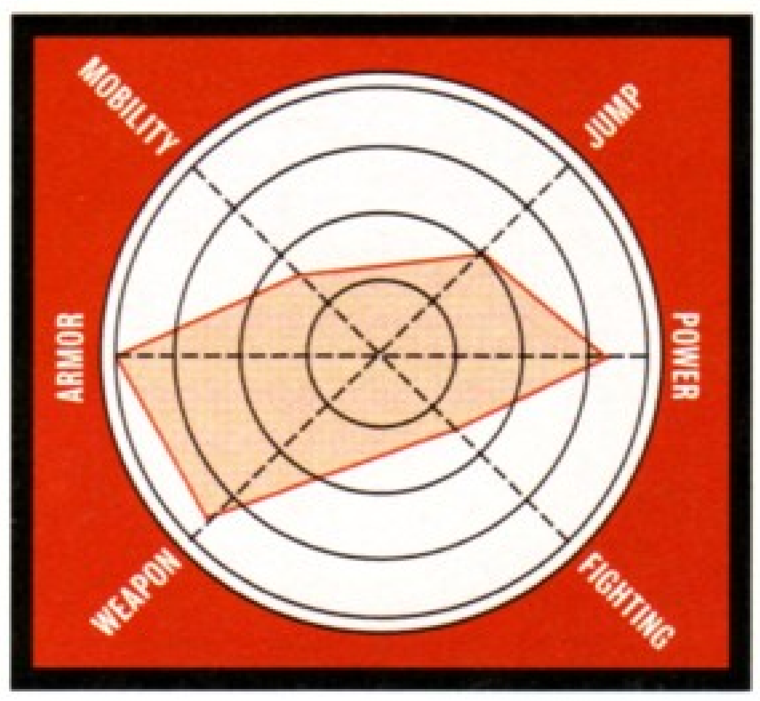
Raiden's Bazooka fires multiple hits. If they all strike, it's... very painful.



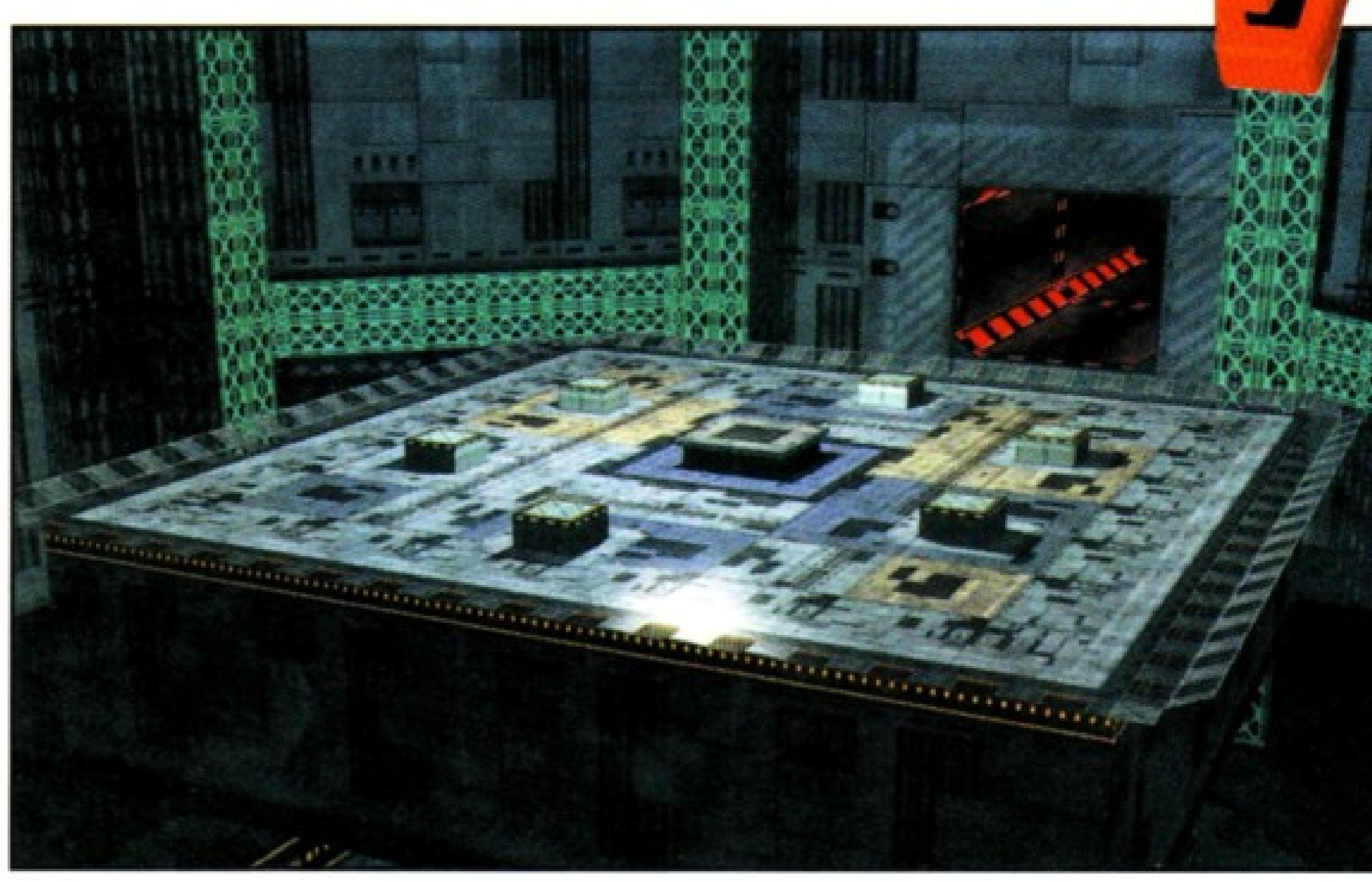
It's a hit! Raiden's Laser utterly annihilates everyone, should it hit.



Raiden engages a boost, firing off his Homing Laser and taking cover simultaneously.







STAGE: DEATH TRAP

Perhaps calling this final stage a "death trap" is a bit of a misnomer really. Having said that, this level is composed of a circular enclosure of buildings, which makes for some very interesting battles. A huge central building also provides some cover, although you'll find the alignment of the other structures also plays a big part.


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Command and Conquer features some brilliant cut-scenes - and this picture (below) is a high-res version of what's in the game. Looks ace eh?











Action aplenty from some of the later missions in Command and Conquer. Above, the Brotherhood of NOD forces unleash their full guerrilla might against a GDI base, targeting their Tiberium processing facilities. To the right we see an equivalent strike from GDI. They're using the sheer numbers of their forces to breach the NOD base, taking out targets in no specific order - just destroying all in their path.

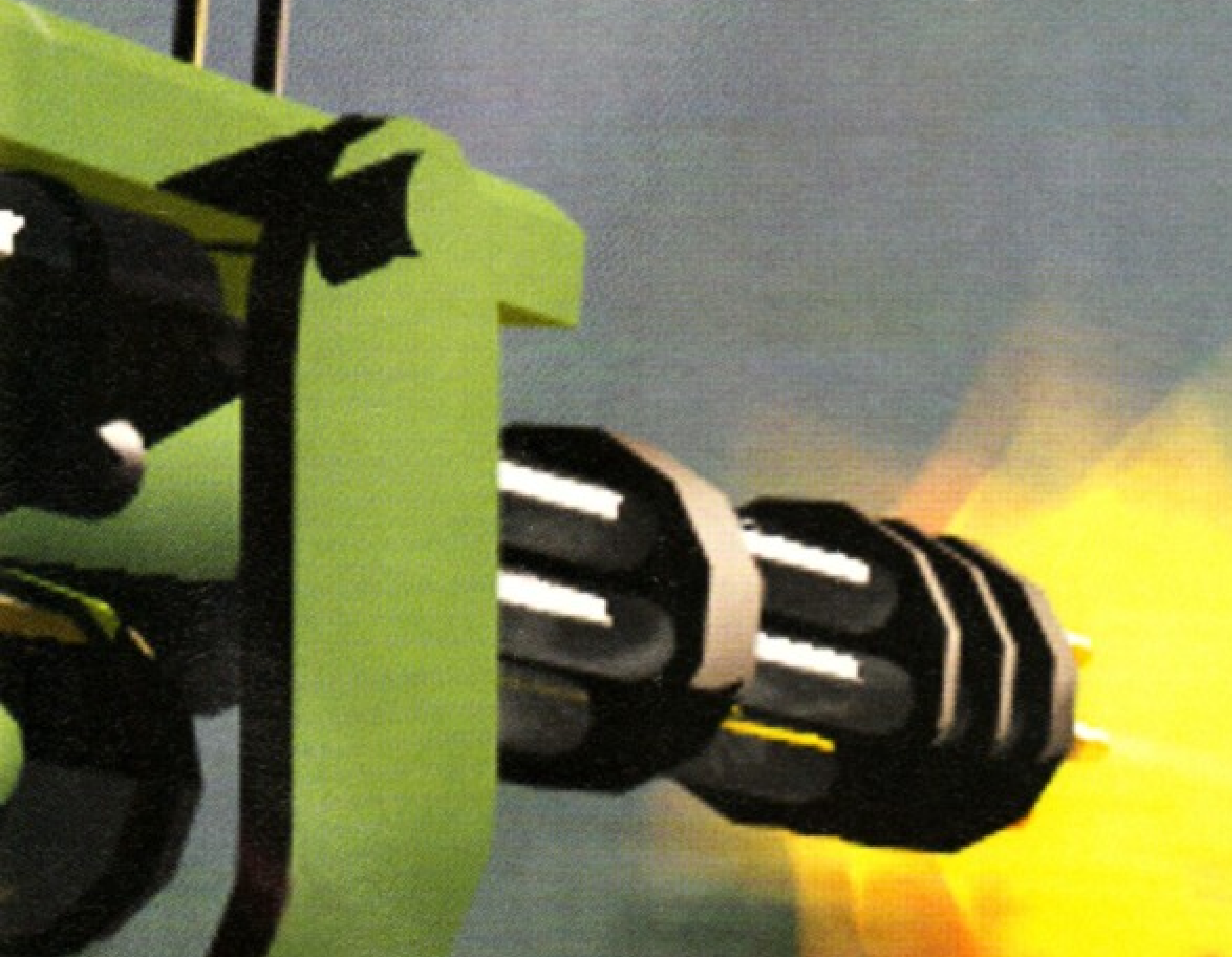




The Brotherhood of NOD continue their rapacious attack on a GDI stronghold (above). Concentrating their fire on the GDI's many power generators, they're focussing on cutting the juice, disabling the facility and making it easy to conquer. In the pictures (left and above left) we see the GDI continuing their strike, selecting fast, lethal aerial forces to inflict damage on key targets whilst the ground forces start a rampage.

LET THE BASE KICK!

This is it - the chance for all Saturn owners to vent their megalomaniacal urges in what must rank as one of the best games on the 32-bit system! We're talking about Virgin's Command and Conquer, the essential war videogame out now! A strategic genius with severe delusions of grandeur, RICHARD LEADBETTER writes...



A vast GDI force prepares to march out against Brotherhood of NOD aggressors (below). Heavy duty tanks combine with foot soldiers and light military vehicles in one devastating force.



If the 94% rating in this month's issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE doesn't do the job convincing you, maybe this showcase will. Occasionally a game comes along that proves extremely easy to get into and utterly impossible to put down. Command and Conquer is such a game - extremely simple controls combine with absorbing action to make this one of the best Saturn titles I've ever played.

Two forces have massed at key strategic points and are engaged in heavy combat. The cause of this fighting is a precious mineral ore known as Tiberium. Whoever controls the Tiberium controls the conflict and thus wins the war. Expect the battles to be long. And bloody.

TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

With Command and Conquer, you get two separate CDs. Load up one and you get to play as the GDI (the Global Defense Initiative). This organisation is the internationally sanctioned "good guy" task force. Their job is to take down the organised terrorist force known as the Brotherhood of Nod and of course to seize all natural Tiberium deposits.

Make use of the other CD and you are the Brotherhood of Nod. Things are a lot more fun with these guys as their job can be summed up with one word: destruction. Civilians aren't there to be protected for these guys - they'll kill any one.

Any way, the bottom line is that both sides have different agendas, different technology and different methods. And you can get to play as both! As you might imagine, this is ACE.

A bit later on in the showcase, you'll see just how radical these two factions are as we dig deeper into their technological means. But why two CDs? Well, each faction also has a completely separate storyline which means totally different full-motion video cut-sequences. That's where all the memory has gone.

THE CONTROLS ARE SIMPLE

Getting to grips with Command and Conquer is exceptionally easy. The game is run using a point and click interface, kind of like Windows on a PC. To take control of a unit under your command you just click on it and then select a place for it to go or an enemy target to attract. Again, like Windows, you can select multiple units by holding down on the button and drawing a box around all of the units you wish to control and then giving them all a single destination or target.

Obviously, you can't be in control of everything at once, so the computer does sit in for you on the odd occasion. For example, if one of your units is under attack it will automatically return fire unless you have given it a higher priority task (such as running away).

Despite this, you still get the idea that you are entirely in control of what your forces are up to. And as such, Command and Conquer just feels superb to play. >>



DIFFERENT ROUTES

Command and Conquer tries its best not to be a totally linear game. As such although there are around 15 missions to complete for the GDI or NOD, your performance in key areas can take you onto different tasks. In all, there are over 50 missions to wade through, so finishing the game with both the GDI and the NOD isn't the end to the game's lastability - there's lots more to discover by re-playing the game again and again. Now that's impressive.

MISSION SUCCESSFUL! GOT AMMUNITION AND JEEPS!

In Command and Conquer's precursor, Dune II: Battle for Arrakis, the objectives of most missions were pretty much identical. Build a base, find the enemy and put them to the bullet. In C&C, things are a whole lot sophisticated. There are the enjoyable search and eliminate missions, of course, but there are bunch of others too such as commandeering a small task force in order to take out a specific target or to break out some prisoners or what-have-you. The fact that the NOD and GDI have different methods also has a huge bearing on the make-up of the mission.

DARK FORCES

Start the game and you'll notice that everything is in the dark. Apart from a small amount of landscape showing around your soldiers, everything is hidden. The key to seeing what's what is to advance your forces. Wherever they go, the landscape appears around them. Getting a communications centre gives you an overview map of all the land you've uncovered. It also shows all of your units and any enemies in this area too. Sometimes it's a good idea to sacrifice some smaller units in order to reveal more of the map. This can help you get more of a warning when the enemy prepares its next onslaught.

BASES LOADED

As well as commanding your units, there's a great deal of construction involved in Command and Conquer. Organising a base to create new troops and harvest the surrounding Tiberium is a carefully balanced act that is especially critical on the later levels. Should you invest your cash in a top-notch Tiberium harvesting operation and hope the enemy hold off long enough for the investment to come in? Or should you concentrate on troops first? It all depends on the mission, really.

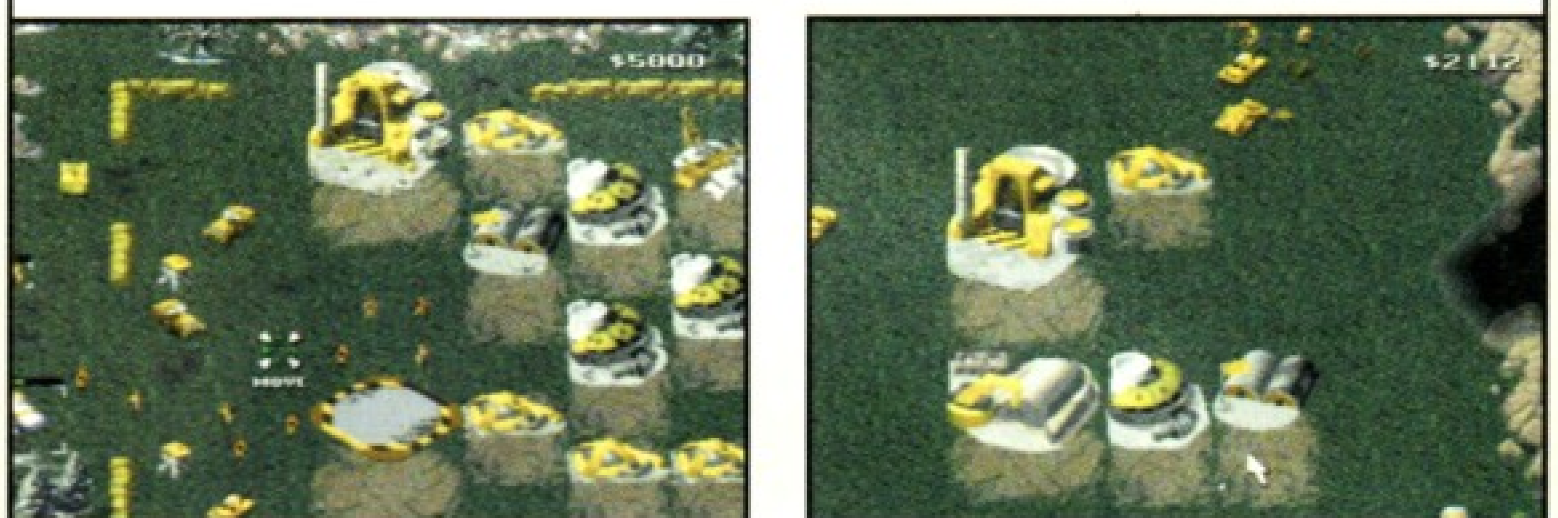
Command and Conquer is reviewed on page 72

TROOPS, TOWERS AND TIBERIUM

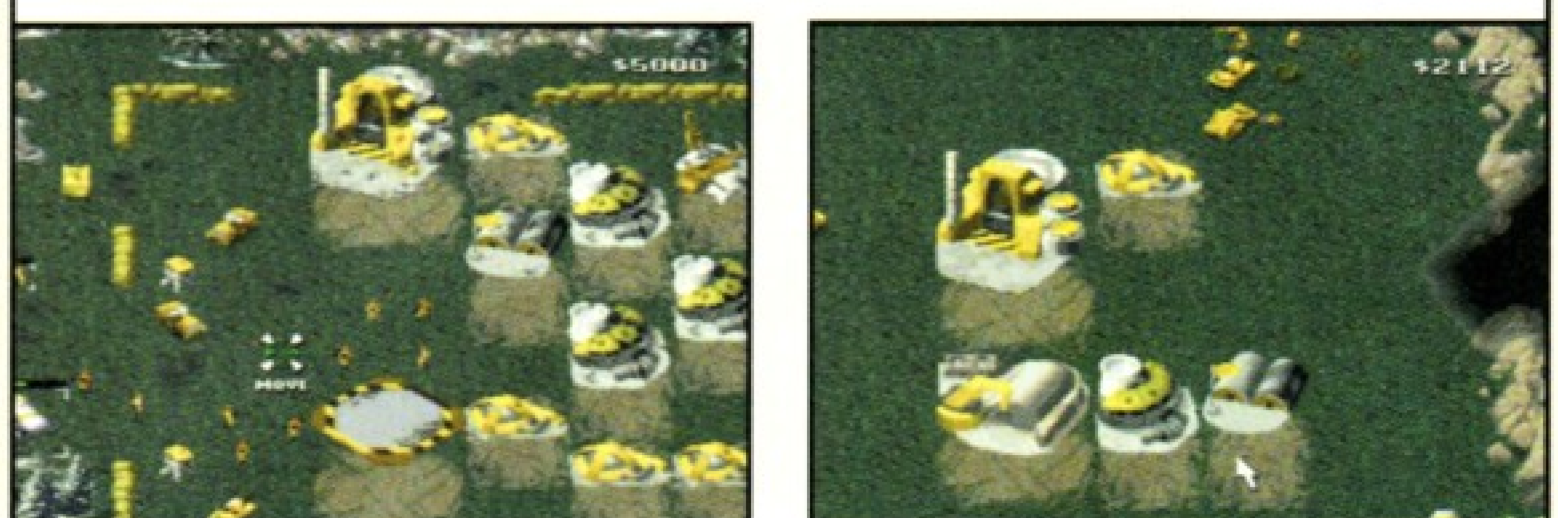
Command and Conquer basically boils down to three different types of job. Getting a balance between all three is the key to success.



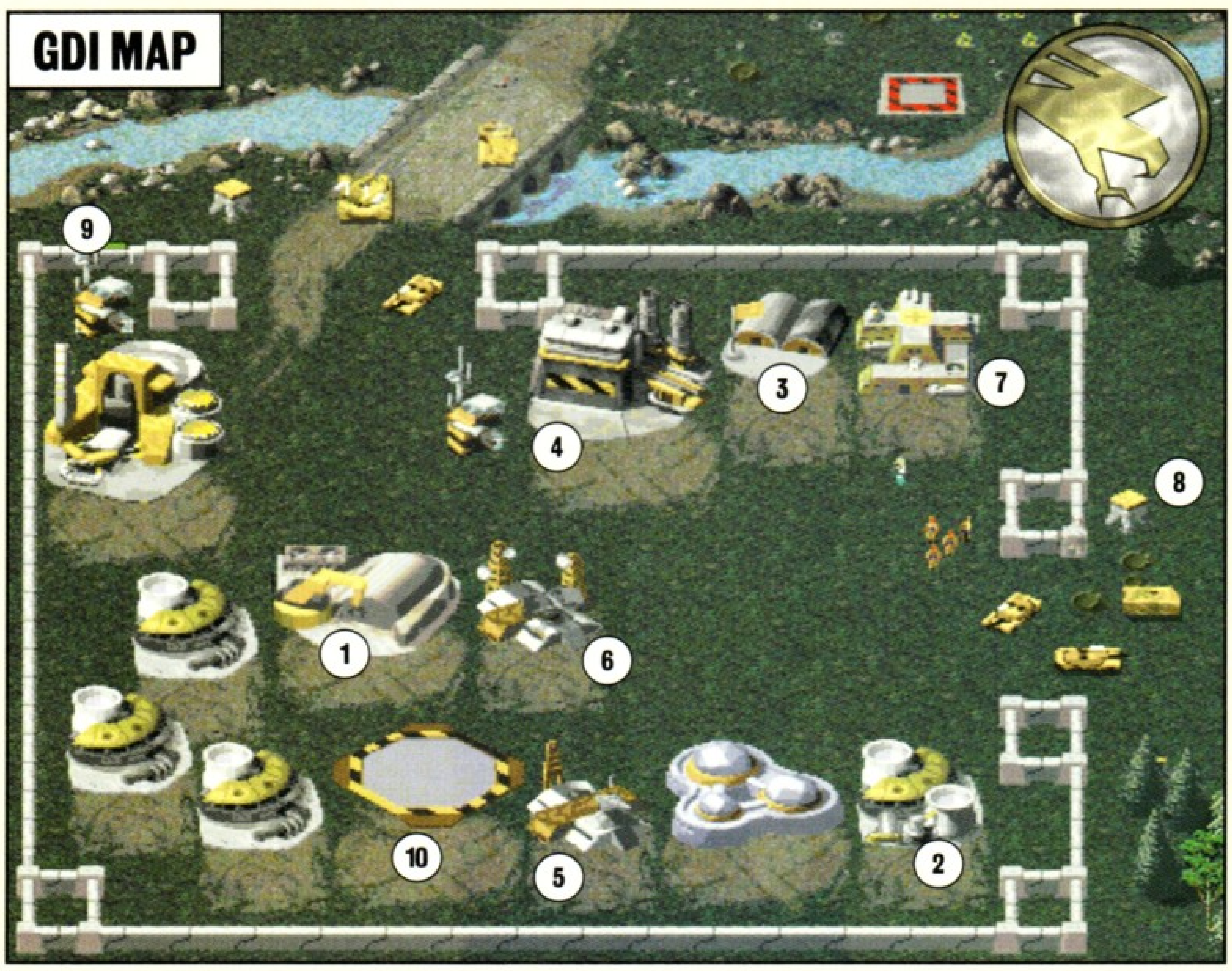
1. Control your Units: The basic control mode text covers this pretty succinctly. Guide your units around, do battle and kill stuff.



2. Construct a Base: Do this in order to successfully carry out your mission. Erect power-plants, barracks, Tiberium processors and long-range weapons.



3. Harvest Tiberium: Build a processing plant and then dispatch your harvesters to the precious ore. This mineral pays for your military operations.



1. CONSTRUCTION SITE
The most important building in the game. The Construction site is used to create all other buildings. It's irreplaceable.

2. ADVANCED POWER PLANT
More advanced technology requires greater power. Hence the creation of this enhanced power facility.

3. BARRACKS
This place is constructed to build and train your footsoldiers. Build more to increase the speed of troop production.

4. WEAPONS FACTORY
This facility is the hardware equivalent of the Barracks, providing the technology to create all manner of light and heavy units, both for the ground and air.

5. COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE
Keep a good look at the overall map with the aid of this centre which tracks all units in land that has been revealed. Get this when the money's really rolling in.

6. ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE
Microwave-based satellite technology is the key to this building, which targets the incredible power of the Orbital Ion Cannons.

7. LABORATORY
Not a building you can create. This is the home of Tiberium scientist Dr Morbius, so this is a particularly notorious NOD target.

8. GUARD TOWER
Based usually around the edges of GDI bases, this unleashes lead death at any NOD interlopers.

9. ADVANCED GUARD TOWER
Instead of lead, this construction uses rockets to take out both ground and air forces that dare attack.

10. REPAIR FACILITY
You can use up your credits by repairing damage done to your units with the aid of this facility. It's a slow and credits-intensive job though.

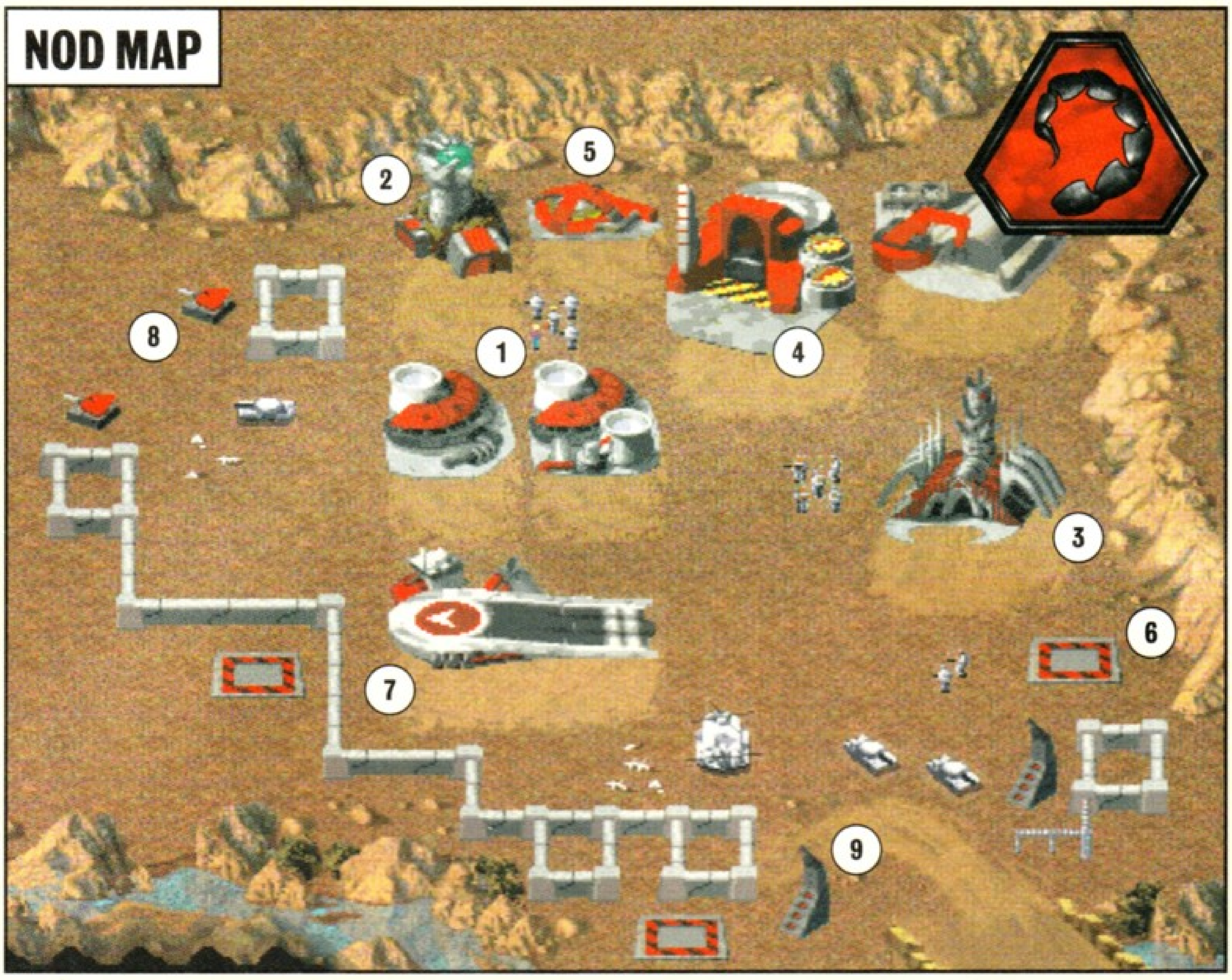
1. POWER PLANT
You need power in order to construct anything else. This is always the first thing you build after deploying your Construction Site.

2. HAND OF NOD
Typically after your Power Plant you build the Hand of NOD. This building supplies NOD troops. Build more than one to create troops quicker.

3. TEMPLE OF NOD
The Temple of NOD is the equivalent to the GDI communications centre. Gives you a better strategic view of the map.

4. TIBERIUM PROCESSOR
This is the centrepiece of your Tiberium Harvesting operation. Buy one and you get the harvester free.

5. SILO
The Processor can only hold 1000 credits' worth of the precious ore. The silos enable you to stockpile 1500 credits more. Essential, really.



6. SAM SITE
On later levels where aerial attacks are prevalent, the Sam Site is your best defence, obviously.

7. WEAPONS DELIVERY RUNWAY
The NOD forces guerrilla tactics involve dropping in troops quickly, quietly and efficiently as opposed to the more conventional GDI methodology. And they do it with this.

8. TURRET
Positioned around the perimeter of the base, the turrets lock on to marauding enemy forces and shoot them until they are dead. Unless they get blown up first, obviously. This can help free up troops from guard duty.

9. OBELISK OF LIGHT
One of the most powerful forces in the NOD arsenal, this unit tracks incoming invaders and blasts them with a high-power laser. Devastating.

UNITS UNITED

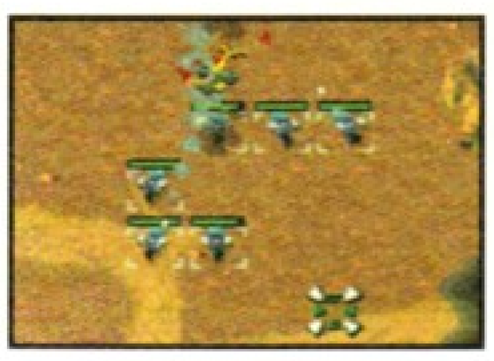
Regardless of whether you're GDI or NOD, the attacking forces at your disposal can be split into several different types. The key is to learn the strengths and weaknesses of each and using them in concert to best effect.

SOLDIERS

On the earlier missions with the low tech-levels, these form the main body of your forces. They come in various different types depending on whether your GDI or NOD. Mini-gunners are the basic soldier for both sides, moving on to the likes of Grenadier and Bazookas on the next tech-level. Later on you get flamethrowers and suchlike. All foot soldiers are pretty weak, and lose energy by walking over Tiberium (which is radioactive).

SEA-BASED TRANSPORT

Some of the missions see you on the edge of the coast, and here you get some assistance from your sea-based vessels. Indeed, the GDI start off the game with the Patrol Boat inflicting missile-death on NOD scum, patrolling from east to west. Also of note is the hovercraft which often arrives to deploy additional reinforcements and maybe even your mobile construction fortress.

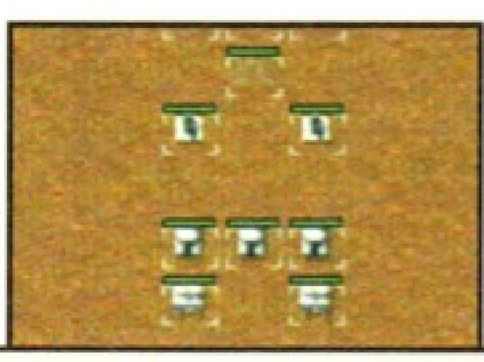


VEHICLES

A vast amount of different ground-based vehicles crop up during the game starting from Dune Buggies and going right up Stealth Tanks and flamethrowing tanks! Sometimes vehicles can be used for other things - for example, the best use of the APC is to carry your troops about as opposed to engaging in battle. Your Tiberium harvesters should also be included here. They have no offensive capabilities - save running over foot soldiers (which is quite amusing, actually).

AIR ATTACK

Unlike Dune II you have full control of air units and there are a vast amount of them on offer including A10 tank busters, transport helicopters and other types of flying menace. These guys only really crop up on the later levels, but if you watch the GDI demo you get a great view of the power of the airborne forces. They can get anywhere at great speed, and although they aren't too heavily armoured, there's little that can really touch them (apart from SAM missiles).







Christmas NiGHTS™ into dreams...

By the time you read this, you really should have got your hands on a fully complete edition of Christmas NiGHTS - the Sonic Team's incredible festive giveaway, as premiered in the last issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. It's more than just a demo disc. In fact, it's far superior to a great many full-price titles. But it's FREE! For more details on this genius game, just take a look at these pages, written by RICH LEADBETTER.



When I first saw NiGHTS I knew it was going to be the king of games. Unfortunately, I kind of missed out on the NiGHTS hysteria that gripped the office when it first came out in Japan on account of the fact that I was on holiday, recovering from nine months of continuously working 60+ hour weeks doing a magazine called Maximum.

Only now, by playing Christmas NiGHTS, have I released what I've been missing out on. So, first of all, for you fools out there who haven't played the full price game, GET YOUR ASS DOWN THE SHOPS AND BUY IT. It's the best sixty quid you'll ever spend and you'll get a spanky new controller which will become the essential Saturn pad for all future games (bar fighting ones).

But why is NiGHTS so great? For a start, the audio-visuals are beyond compare, the gameplay deep and compelling. Yes, you can complete it in an afternoon, but the real skill is in racking up huge scores, just like in the old days of videogames. Oh yes, NiGHTS is a classic. The playability is near-perfect, putting this on the same level as Virtua Fighter 2, which is a huge compliment coming from me.

IT'S MORE THAN A DEMO

For those still not convinced, Christmas NiGHTS is the perfect opportunity to sample the NiGHTS phenomenum. You get an entire levels' worth of festive NiGHTS, which changes depending on if you choose to play as Elliot or Claris. Also, the game layout differs considering what time of year it is. Christmas NiGHTS, for example is the game variation you get on the run-up to December 25. New Year NiGHTS is yours after January 1st. All versions have different layouts. Typically, the longer you've had the game, the more difficult it becomes, but the important thing is that THE GAME CHANGES OVER TIME! Isn't that a mark of genius? Of course, you can reset your Saturn clock and play whatever game variation you want if you're a cheat, but somehow it doesn't seem right. A bit like kissing your sister (not that I have one).

Suffice to say, although it's no replacement for the full-on NiGHTS (in fact, it's a supplement) Christmas NiGHTS has more lastability than many full-price games. Only it is FREE, a gift to loyal Saturn owners from the Sonic Team. Now that's class.



The basic game engine is identical to full-price NiGHTS, but the graphics are all-new. Ace!



Take your chips to the Christmas tree.



















As you can see, when you select Christmas NiGHTS, the eponymous character switches into his funky festive costume! Oh, on a different note, if you own Christmas NiGHTS and think you have found everything (ie you've opened all the presents), try setting the date on the Saturn's memory to April 1 for a nice surprise. Who knows how many other such bonuses are in the game. Well, the Sonic Team do, but they don't count.



OOOROJIMA!

We could go on for hours about the gameplay in NiGHTS, but we've done it before in previous SEGA SATURN MAGAZINEs. Despite the initially confusing layout, your task is simply to collect 20 chips, take them to a cage (in this case, located beneath a Christmas tree) and then return to where you first found NiGHTS in order to move on to the next course (there are four of them before the boss, Gillwing, makes the scene).

Going through hoops and collecting objects quickly in succession racks up "Links" - the higher the link, the more of a Master you are and the higher ranking you'll get when you return to NiGHTS' lair. This bit is the real challenge in NiGHTS as the chip-collection bit is about as difficult as putting on a hat.



BUT WHY?

Claris and Elliot, the main protagonists in NiGHTS are getting all festive in the amazing Christmas card style full-motion video intro. Unfortunately, their town's awesome festive tree is missing an essential component - a shining star! That night, as Claris and Elliot drift off into sleep, they team up with NiGHTS to supply the missing star, and so begins an all-new adventure! Plus! NiGHTS gets to put on this kinky new Christmas costume he's been waiting all year to wear.

NiGHTS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

(Crosshead: copyright Paul Davies) The main idea of this feature is to show off the myriad presents that the Sonic Team have hidden in NiGHTS. You see, every time you complete the four courses and despatch the boss, Gillwing, you're taken to a Patience style game.

A vast array of cards are laid out in front of you. Turn over a card to produce a symbol. Match up two identical symbols to get a Present. It's that simple. Return to the title screen and check out what gifts the Sonic Team have lavished upon you... There's some amazing stuff in there, most of which is revealed in this feature. It's also exclusive to Christmas NiGHTS. None of the other stuff is in the real game, emphasising still further why this is a supplement to the full title, not just a demo.



The party poppers on the stage shoot off tons of streamers and suchlike when NiGHTS hits them.

I WANT THIS GAME, NOT EXCUSES

Christmas NiGHTS is currently available when you buy a Saturn or some software from selected retailers (ask your local high street shop for details). It's a game that is as essential to the Saturn as Rally, Virtua Fighter 2 and indeed, NiGHTS itself! Alternatively, you can score a bit of a Saturn double-whammy by turning to page 64 now. We have a limited number of copies of Christmas NiGHTS to GIVE AWAY when you subscribe to SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. Go on, you know you want to.



The usual NiGHTS hoops abound in the yuletide edition of the game, but they've been graphically updated with decorations. Oooh.



An enormous Christmas pressie explodes!







Ever have dreams where you're running about in your pyjamas? Well Claris and Elliot dream about being dressed up like idiots when it comes to the festive period. Or so it would seem.

SHOWCASE

I HAVE FELT YOUR PRESENTS

Yes, I used that heading before, but it raised a few laughs last time, so why not use it again? Suffice to say, this part of the showcase is all about the gifts available for cunning NiGHTS players to uncover in this masters' title.

LINK ATTACK

We showed off Link Attack last month, but for completion's sake, here it is again. One course from the original game's Frozen Bell level has been included and here it's possible to continuously go through hoops and collect objects with no delay, allowing you to rack up an enormous link! Brilliant eh? Christmas NiGHTS keeps track of high-scorers, a great feature for gloaters.













MUSIC BOX

CyberSound is one of the best things about NiGHTS. Depending on your actions, the music in the game changes to reflect your actions. Amazing. Should you reveal this gift, You can mix up your own CyberSound soundtrack on the special screen and then play the game with it. Ace.





THE NiGHTS MUSEUM!

When the Sonic Team put together NiGHTS, every aspect of the game was carefully planned and crafted. As you will discover when you check out the NiGHTS Museum presents. These are simple static screens which you can flick between and show off the original 3D models of the main characters and Nightopians and what have you. All of the original promotional artwork is also available here. This all just goes to show how much thought and detail has gone into this classic game!



TWO VIDEOS!

Two promotional videos were recorded to advertise NiGHTS in Japan, and this is your only chance to see the amazing CG rendered sequences that the Sonic Team created. The first video comes from the 1996 Tokyo Toy Show, where NiGHTS made its debut to the Japanese Saturn fans. The second is a Summer Special vid, again crafted by the expert computer graphics renderers at Sonic Team HQ. Very entertaining for a short while.





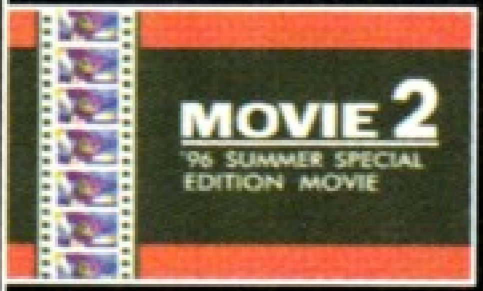




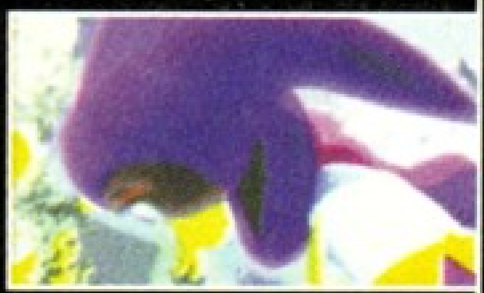




(ABOVE) Game footage and some familiar FMV in the first NiGHTS vid.
(BELOW) Elliot plays basketball in a bizarre Warhol-esque video experience.

















NiGHTS GOODS

This present shows what a marketing phenomenum NiGHTS is in Japan. The full range of NiGHTS goods including toys and artwork is revealed here, along with promotional material (like an absurd NiGHTS hat Tom Guise likes to wear) courtesy of Sega of America.







The NiGHTS hat in particular stands out as being most ridiculous.

The Japanese NiGHTS merchandise is far more imaginative and cool.





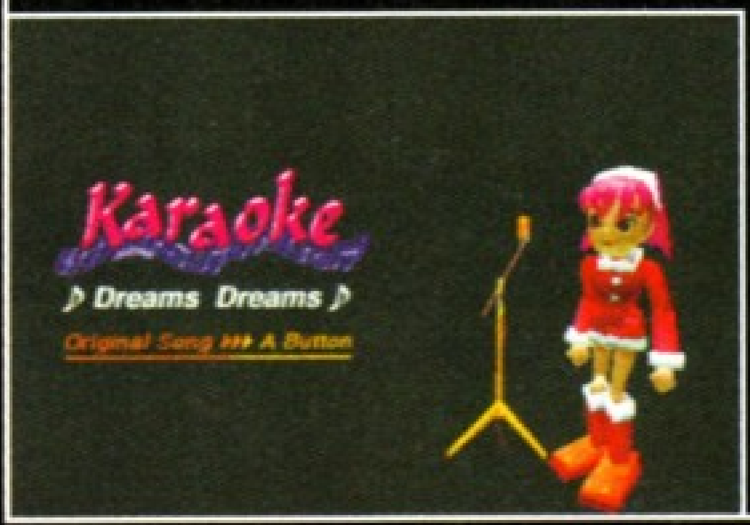
NIGHTOPIAN COLLECTION

Check out the inhabitants of Christmas NiGHTS' Spring Valley, along with all of the Nightopians in the full version of the game (if you have saved data on your Saturn). The full range of A-Life beings has still yet to be ascertained!



KARAOKE MODE

That NiGHTS soundtrack eh? It's a bit of a toe-tapping experience and now you can join in without memorising the lyrics, thanks to some on-screen prompting as NiGHTS does his "thang" in the background.







TIME ATTACK

A bit more cunning than Link Attack, this version of the game gives you another single course to zoom around and it's your job to blast around the layout, collecting EVERY item in the shortest possible time. Once again, every high-score is recorded. Should you miss any item, your effort it judged null and void (expect NiGHTS to appear in your dreams and give you a good slap around the chops)..













BUT BEST OF ALL... SONIC INTO DREAMS!

Here it is, the official debut for Sonic the Hedgehog on Sega Saturn (unless you count that scabby cameo in Bug) from the hands of the Sonic Team! In Sonic the Hedgehog into Dreams, the noted spiky mammal drifts off into the land of NiGHTS, only to discover that the DreamMaster is nowhere to be found! If there's any evil to be vanquished, Sonic's going to have do it himself while NiGHTS takes a well-earned rest and eats some pies or something.

In actual fact, this present is much like playing with a turbo-powered Claris or Elliot. NiGHTs is firmly out of the picture as Sonic hurtles around the landscape, collecting chips. performing enormous leaps and what-have-you.

The big news, though, is that Gillwing is no longer the boss here - Robotnik strikes in his place! In a sequence very similar to Puffy's boss area in the full game, it's down to Sonic to grab hold of the robust Robotnik and smash his blubbery hide through various walls! It's most brilliant indeed.









SONIC BOOM!



Though Sonic Blast 3D is played out on an isometric 3D landscape rather than a 2D, sideways-scrolling arrangement of platforms, the programmers have managed to make the feel of the controls very familiar to anyone who has played the Megadrive games. Sonic runs, jumps, spins and slides with exactly the same degree of inertia. We don't mind telling you, it's all quite eery.





The action just gets hotter and hotter!





A Sega console without a Sonic the Hedgehog game? Why, that's simply incredible! And yet that's just what the Saturn has been... until now! PAUL GLANCEY reports.



Ever since his platform escapades began on the Megadrive in 1991, Sonic the Hedgehog has been a major success for Sega. It has even been said that it was the Sonic games that established Sega's presence in a worldwide console market dominated by Nintendo. All of which makes it all the more amazing that Sega have waited this long to bring him to the Saturn!

There were some Saturn-based Sonic projects on the boil at Sega of America earlier this year, notably Sonic X-Treme, but when the head of the Sonic Team, Yuji Naka, saw a work-in-progress version of a new 3D Sonic game for the Megadrive he thought it was so good that he asked that all other Saturn Sonic work be put on hold in favour of a conversion. Sonic Blast 3D is the result of that decision, and it's scheduled to finally hit the shops in February of 1997.

Sonic Blast 3D once again pits the famed high-speed hedgehog against his old arch-enemy, a well-upholstered madman called Dr Ivo Robotnik, in the seemingly never-ending quest for the all-powerful Chaos Emeralds.

It seems the Chaos Emeralds are currently residing somewhere on Flicky Island, under the protection of the inhabitants, a race of cute pan-dimensional bird creatures called the Flickies. Dr Robotnik has discovered the whereabouts of the Chaos Emeralds, and has set up defences around Flicky Island to prevent anyone from disturbing his search. Among these defences is an army of robot badniks which are powered by living creatures. Sinister fiend that he is, Robotnik is using the Flickies themselves to power his badniks, capturing them with his own transdimensional Big Ring Portal Generators which the Flickies feel compelled to fly into.

With the safety of the planet of Mobius at stake, it's up to Sonic to get to those Chaos Emeralds before Robotnik does. To do that he has to explore Flicky Island's many isometric 3D landscapes, scooping up the golden rings that are just lying all over the place. Once he has collected enough rings he can trade them in for a trip into the game's bonus stages, wherein lie the Emeralds themselves.

While he's doing all that he also has to rescue the Flickies from their infernal imprisonment by smashing their robot shells and leading them back to the nearest Big Ring. When all of the Flickies have been sent back to the Flicky Dimension, Sonic can zip onward to the next part of the level.

Any seasoned Sega player will realise that Sonic Blast 3D employs all the traditional Sonic paraphernalia that made the games such a hit with Megadrive, Master System and Game Gear players in the past. Now, with the benefits of deluxe isometric 3D, Saturn-powered graphics and CD sound, we should be able to expect this game to be the best of the lot! Read on, and salivate in anticipation of our next month's review of Sonic Blast 3D, in which the truth will out!



Sonic BOING!! Mr The Hedgehog is catapulted skywards in the Spring Stadium zone.









SONIC BLAST - THE MOVIE

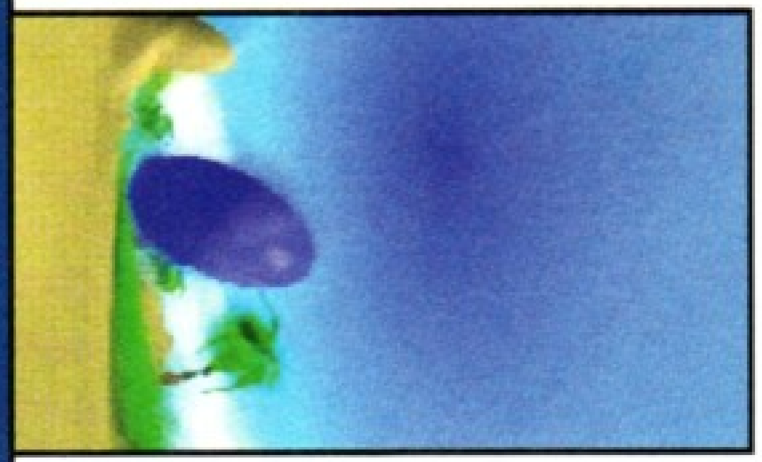
One thing that Saturn Sonic Blast 3D has that the Megadrive version didn't is this cool rendered intro which appears as soon as the game boots up. Gaze in wonder as Sonic arrives on idyllic Flicky Island! Gasp in awe as he runs about at vision-blurring velocities! And cheer joyously as he launches into a spin-dash attack that smashes evil badniks and releases the cuddly Flickies imprisoned within! Toot! Toot! Sonic warrior!

















HEDGEHOG 'IN THE ZONE'

In true Sonic tradition, Sonic Blast 3D is made up of 'zones' divided into 'acts'. Seven zones of three acts each makes a total of 21 levels, but even these are subdivided into different sections. Each section has its own complement of Flickies to find, and once you've sent them back through the Big Ring to their own dimension a trapdoor is revealed that transports Sonic to the next part of the act.

Zone 1: Green Grove Zone

The Sonic Blast equivalent of Megadrive Sonic's Green Hill Zone, with polygonal palm trees, hedgehog-skewering spikes and high-speed loop-the-loops. The Flickies are encased in the mechanical forms of slow-moving hornets, worms that leap from holes in the ground and pyramidal blob monsters with rotating spiky balls. They're all pretty easy to handle, though, so this is a fairly easy zone.





Zone 2: Rusty Ruins Zone

Eerie, Enigma-style, monks-chanting-in-a-night-club music backs the action in this misty and mysterious castle level, allegedly the reclaimed remains of Atlantis. Watch out for the robot bees and crocodiles which contain the kidnapped Flickies, and the spinner tiles which turn Sonic into a whirling, twirling, rock-busting, bad-nik-bashing maniac.







Zone 3: Spring Stadium Zone

Robot puffer fish, mosquitoes, crabs and tarantulas terrorise the hedgehog in this zone, but even more dangerous are the spiky floor panels which slice into the soles of Sonic's little feet. To make matters worse, the place is full of pinball bumpers which fling Sonic around as if he were a small mammal in a pinball machine. Luckily the jazzy circus fanfares keep the mood distinctly upbeat.





Zone 4: Diamond Dust Zone

No platform game would be complete without an ice level, and this is Sonic Blast's. While sleighbells 'jingle all the way', Sonic frees Flickies from the steel shells of robot penguins, bunnies on pogo sticks and Dalek-esque killer snowmen.







Zone 5: Volcano Valley Zone

From ice... to fire! Dramatic music and sulphurous odours fill the air (though you have to imagine the latter), as Sonic dodges across pits of frothing lava and gurgling mud pools. This is a landscape that bristles with deadly laser gun turrets and it's patrolled by mechanical ladybirds, wasps and scorpions, none of whom hold out the claw of friendship.





Zone 6: Gene Gadget Zone

Floor-fitted fans blast our hedgehoggy hero into the air at strategic points in this stage, while electro-tiles zap Sonic's toes with shocking force if he's wont to dawdle. Robots in the form of fearsome rats and death-dealing octopoids are the other threat here and Sonic also has to worry about finding his way through a network of pipes which connect the different plateaux in each act.







Zone 7: Panic Puppet Zone

This is Robotnik's inner sanctum where Sonic's mission is simply to find the evil egg-shaped genius and thrash his backside about. While ominous techno tunes bang away in the background, Sonic threads his way between high-tech electrical circuitry, bubble guns and spidery robots. Check out the ever-looming presence of the giant Robotnik in the background!









VENGEANCE OF AN EGG-SHAPED MAN

That Dr Robotnik! He's a repellent over-stuffed old stinker! He lurks in the third act of each zone, waiting for Sonic to turn up so that he can smash in his tiny blue skull with some nefarious Sonic-proof robot.

As soon as Sonic arrives, Robotnik descends with an evil cackle and unleashes the full might of his mechanical monstrosity in the form of missiles, giant spiky balls, plumes of flame or something even worse. Fortunately, Robotnik isn't completely safe inside his robots, and if Sonic times it right he can bash in Robotnik's cockpit with a devastating spin-dash attack. Score enough hits and Robotnik flees with his filthy tail between his chubby legs. Har har! *That* to you, Robotnik!



Dr Ivo Robotnik differs from most other doctors insofar as he is so thoroughly evil.



Robotnik is invulnerable inside the cockpit of his anti-Sonic machines, but should Sonic be able to leap on to his bubblicious glass canopy he can inflict enough damage to discourage the rotund boffin's reprehensible advances.



THE MAGIC OF TELEVISION

In true Sonic tradition, the landscape is littered with TV sets containing a familiar array of power-ups that boost the intrepid hedgehog's badnik-busting powers. And they are:



Regular blue shields protect Sonic from a single collision. They never come in wrong, you know.



A trail of sparkling stars shows Sonic has the short-lived ability to withstand deadly environments and destroy any foe he touches.



Red shields offer the same protection as the blue shields (ie. one direct hit and they're gone) but they also allow Sonic to withstand fiery foes AND walk on lava.



Extra life tellies. Quite rare, these. We had to play for ages before we found this one. And you'll never guess what they do. Well. You might. All right, you definitely will.



The gold shields give Sonic the power of the blast attack! Jump and hit the jump button again and he homes in on nearby foes, smashing them into oblivion! What a guy! What a hedgehog!



Often to be found floating high above bouncy springs, but Sonic often needs to fling a trail of Flickies at a medal to reach it – a bit of an advanced technique in this game. Ten medals gets you an extra credit.







Why if it isn't old Knuckles. Sonic'll have to twirl these columns to dust to reach him.



See how Sonic evades these plumes of flame! Truly he is King of All Hedgehogs!



SONIC BLAST FROM THE PAST

Sonic's pals Tails (a twin-tailed foxling) and Knuckles (a rock-hard echidna or 'spiny ant-eater' if you must) are hiding out around Flicky Island. If you can find them and give them 50 rings they transport Sonic to the bonus stages wherein lie those all-important Chaos Emeralds without which Robotnik cannot be defeated and the game cannot be properly completed.

This part of the game will be familiar to any ex-Megadrive owners, as it's almost exactly the same as the bonus stage from Sonic 2, except it's all done out in cool Gouraud-shaded polygon graphics! You control Sonic as he legs it down a twisting 3D track grabbing the rings sprinkled along the floor and up the walls. To reach the Chaos Emerald at the end of the track he has to collect enough rings to make it through the checkpoints along the way. But beware of spiky balls that block the track at certain points! If Sonic runs into one he drops his rings and has to start collecting all over again. Gnnn!

The bonus stage was the only part of Sonic Blast 3D that was programmed by Sonic Team, and though the rest of the game looks cool, this looks REEEALLY cool!





When he's not being flung along rollercoaster runways (left) Sonic's walking on water – UPHILL! What other fictional mammal could accomplish such feats!? Don't bother answering that.

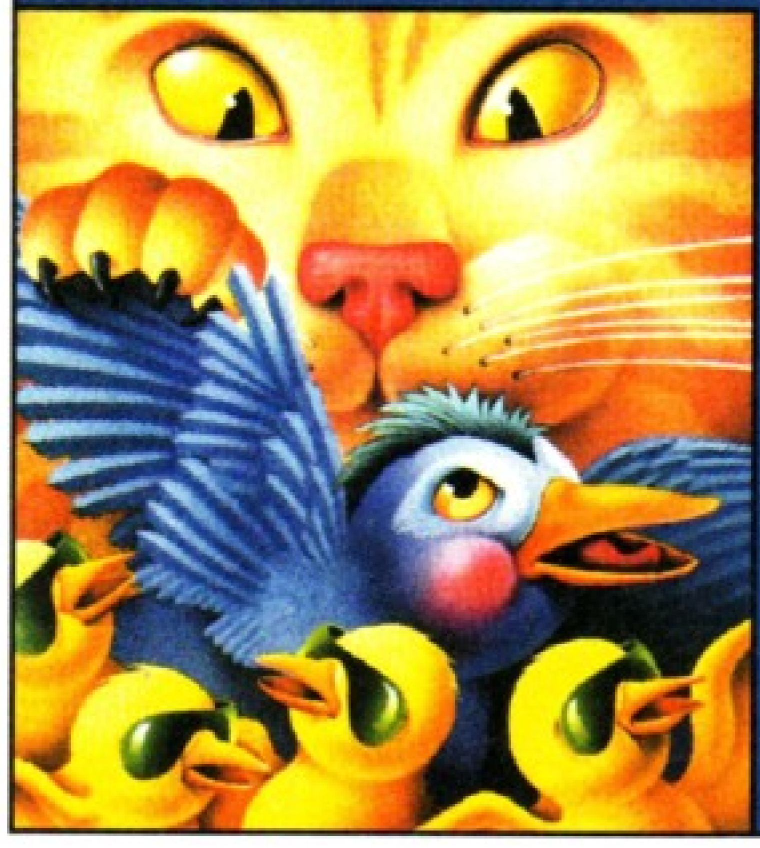




FLICKY: "I COULDA BEEN A STAR!"

You don't have to believe it if you don't want to, but the fact of the matter is that the Flickies were once heroes of their own game! Yes, sir! Sega's 1984 Flicky coin-op - and indeed the Megadrive conversion which followed years later - cast the player as a small bird called Flicky who flapped around platformy levels rescuing chicks (of the bird variety) from ravenous cats. Sounds familiar, no? Yes!

Obviously, in his old age, Flicky has been forced to join the ranks of the rescuees in a co-starring role - a sad tale of a video game star who peaked to soon. Let's hope this appearance heralds a Travolta-like revival in his fortunes. Roll on, Flicky Blast 3D! Kind of.





This might look like purest pants, but our recollection is that Flicky was quite a jolly larf on the Megadrive, and our brother reviewers rated the game quite highly for its simple-minded fun-power. Ah, memories.

MUSIC BY...

Sonic 3D features a total of 24 pieces of top quality music created by none other than Sega Europe's main music man, Richard Jacques, who produced the better tracks in the recently released Daytona CCE (amongst other things). For Sonic 3D, the man Jacques has out-done himself with a range of amazing music, ranging from dancey Sonic-style music through to more hardcore techno. It's all rather excellent stuff. What's more you get different music for every stage, changing slightler per act. There's even some great over-the-top dastardly music for Robotnik's entrance.

This time, Richard Jacques has produced the entire soundtrack, making for a far more cohesive sound throughout the entire game, as opposed to the clashing styles of music in Daytona CCE. Hurrah.



Pause the game and a map of the act appears, marked with the locations of any uncollected Flickies that might be roaming around.



Tingalingaling! Sonic sends this act's quota of Flickies through the twinkling ring and back to their own dimension.



Behold! Flicky Island in all its glory! Who but Sonic could make it to the lair of Robotnik?

SONIC SECRETS

Like all the other Sonic games, Sonic Blast 3D has its fair share of secret bits. Is that really a bricked-up doorway? Or could Sonic rev up and smash through it into some hidden coin-packed sub-level? Could that cluster of smashable boulders hide a tunnel to another part of Flicky Island where Tails or Knuckles are waiting to take Sonic to a bonus stage? The answer to both these questions is a definite "maybe", so whenever you see a suspicious rock formation or a shadowy entrance be sure to test them for breakability with a devastating spin-dash attack.









Whirling-twirling-swirling, Sonic prepares to flatten some path-blocking pillars.







When Sonic has the golden shield he wields the power of the Blast Attack. Press the jump button once, and again, and Sonic homes in on the nearest badnik and destroys it!









TRAVELLER'S TALES

Sonic 3D Blast wasn't entirely the work of the original Sonic Team. In fact the main game was programmed by Traveller's Tales, a developer better known for their Megadrive titles. If remember serves us correctly, Psygnosis' Puggsy was one of theirs, as was Sega's more recent hit, Toy Story, and then of course there was the Megadrive version of Sonic 3D. So, let's hear it for those Traveller's Tales guys who have contributed so much to console entertainment and have such a fancy company logo!



Christmas NiGHTS™ into dreams...



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Christmas NiGHTS is upon us and it's really rather excellent indeed. A whole four courses (plus obligatory boss) of yuletide festivities await along with over 20 "present" secret bits to discover, including the Saturn debut of Sonic the Hedgehog! You can't really afford to miss this! It's brilliant.



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SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

Christmas NiGHTS™ into dreams...

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TWIX® JUNIOR GAMESPLAYER OF THE YEAR IN ASSOCIATION WITH EMAP IMAGES

THE RESULTS!

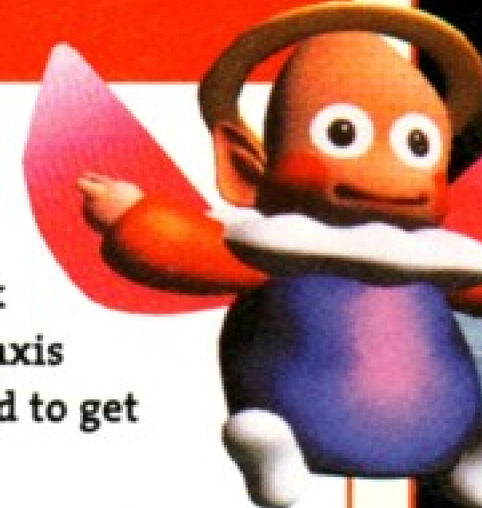


A few months ago in SSM, we teamed up with TWIX® and began our search to find the greatest NiGHTS player in the country. This culminated in an enormous challenge held at the Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street as we strove to find the TWIX® Junior Gamesplayer of the Year!

Remember our appeals to find the greatest Saturn gamer a few months ago in this very magazine? We asked our super-talented readership to get to grips with NiGHTS and send in their highest Link score on the Frozen Bell area of this incredible game! Quite literally we were deluged with responses over the next few weeks as Saturn gamers attempted to master this most competitive area of the game.

Out of the many entries received, only these eight brave gamers proved themselves worthy: Ben Bratchell from Surrey, Robert Doubtfire from Kent, Matthew Griffiths also of Kent, Robert Allsop from Derby, Marco Vito of Bournmouth, Edward Lee of Worthing, Edmund Hodge of London and Ben Whittington from Ossett.

LET THE ACTION BEGIN!



The finals were held at the Virgin Megastore on Oxford Street on Saturday 2 November. As the starting time for the tournament drew closer, the store began to fill to brimming with rapt onlookers. Hosting the event was Rick Henderson (from GamesMaster) and Chris Knight from Maxis software. The game set-up was simple. The challengers had to get as high a link as possible in two minutes.

THE EIGHT CHALLENGERS

BEN BRATCHELL: 42 LINK	ROBERT DOUBTFIRE: 52 LINK
MATTHEW GRIFFITHS: 23 LINK	RICHARD ALLSOP: 21 LINK
MARCO VITO: 31 LINK	EDWARD LEE: 57 LINK
EDMUND HODGE: 15 LINK	BEN WHITTINGTON: 109 LINK

A masterful contest here, with Ben Whittington's frankly gargantuan 109 link way, way ahead of his opponents. But could he carry on the momentum in the final, where the four best players squared off?



Edward Lee stuns onlookers with his accomplished NiGHTS skills as he begins the game of his life! He finished the first round with a fairly decent 57 Link.

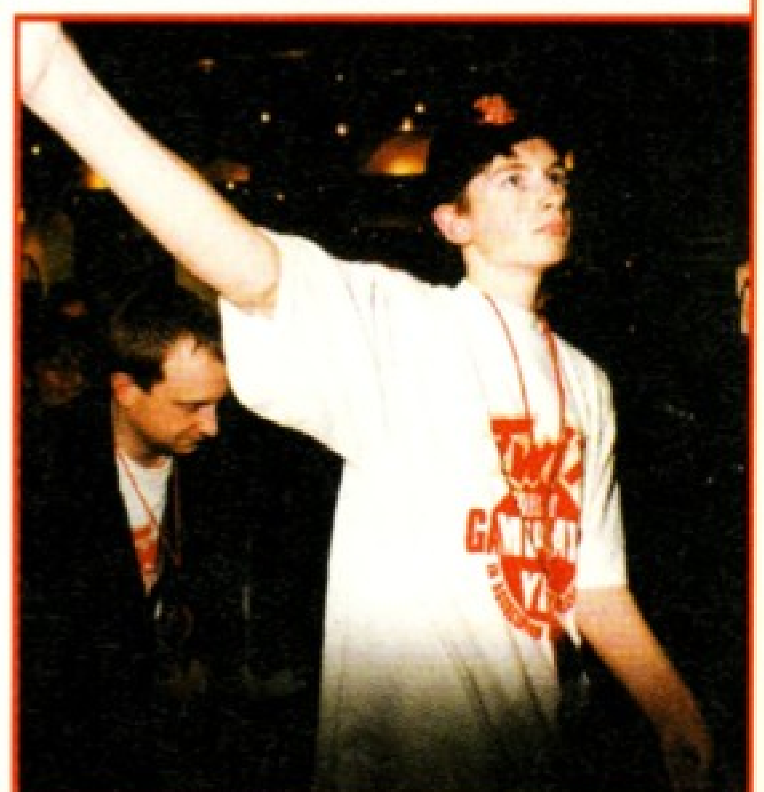
THE FINAL FOUR

BEN WHITTINGTON: 52 LINK	EDWARD LEE: 55 LINK
ROBERT DOUBTFIRE: 98 LINK	BEN BRATCHELL: 52 LINK

Taking a break after the first round and powering themselves up with a trusty TWIX®, the contestents sat down for the final confrontation! Some pretty sterling performances all-round, but Robert Doubtfire streaked to victory with a frankly unfeasible 98 link! To the victor, the spoils!



Ben Whittington is questioned about his performance by Maxis' Chris Knight.



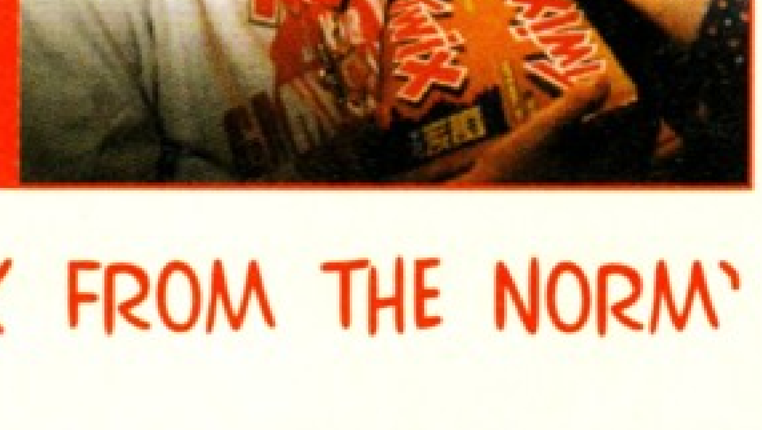
Ben Bratchell appeals for mass support as he takes the stand for the challenge.

WE HAVE A WINNER!

After a tense, but exciting contest, Robert Doubtfire emerged triumphant, winning himself every Sega Saturn game for the next year, a veritable mountain of TWIX® bars plus a celebratory medal for his efforts. He is the TWIX® Junior Gamesplayer of the Year!

The finalists also did pretty well, scooping up an array of TWIX® bars, a cool medal to impress their friends with, plus a goodie-bag.

If you missed this event, you missed a most excellent, enjoyable occasion. Next year, there could well be something very similar going on, so why not "Take a break from the norm" and ready yourself for the next TWIX® Junior Gamesplayer of the Year challenge!



Robert Doubtfire – the official TWIX® Junior Gamesplayer of the year is interviewed for radio after he won the final NiGHTS challenge!

VIRTUAL ON

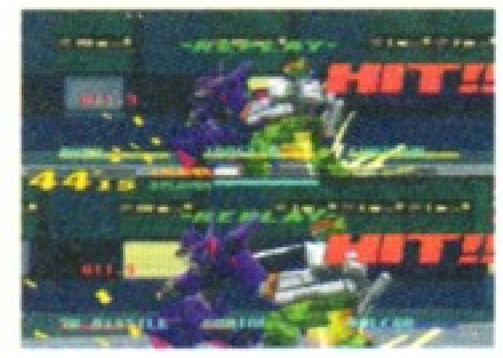
So... Fighting Vipers, Virtua Cop 2 and Daytona CCE aren't good enough for you eh? Well, try this all-new AM3 arcade conversion of the excellent two-player battler, Virtual On.

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	ROBOT FIGHTING
RELEASE	DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 93%



The replays supply some mind-blowingly amazing action sequences, replaying the final destructive moments of the round in spectacular fashion.







Look out for an in-depth Virtual On play guide soon!

DUAL PLAYER ACTION

Virtual On was originally designed as a two-player game in the arcades. Indeed, it's ONLY a two-player game and as such it's a pretty expensive coin-op and thus only found in big arcades. That being the case, it has to be said that the Saturn version really is far, far better when played against a human opponent. There's very little more satisfying than using skill and strategy to totally outquaff, outgun and basically outdo your opponent in every single way. It's more of an enclosed one-on-one arcade fest than say, Doom or Quake, but it's very, very cool. And strategic too - hence a 200+ page play guide available in Japan.







Virtual On is the deepest, most strategic two-player game to hit Saturn since the legendary Virtua Fighter 2. High praise indeed.

The Japanese are well known for their cultural tastes which are... well, a bit "different" to what us westerners are used to. For a start there's anime movies, a penchant for semi-naked adolescents, sushi and TV programmes where two men in rubber dinosaur suits battle it out. What is perhaps more up our alley is the concept of huge, armoured battle robots duking it out in deserted arenas for no particular reason. And it is upon this premise that Sega's R&D Dept #3 bring us (cue fanfare) Virtual On!

That might seem to be a pretty lame scenario on which to base a videogame, but in Virtual On's case, this is actually something of a good move. Keep the concept simple, but introduce tons of gameplay concepts and ideas to give the game some depth.





Take the hunter-killer aspects of Doom, mix and match with some Street Fighter and CyberSled and you have Virtual On - deceptively simple, but very deep and extremely exciting.

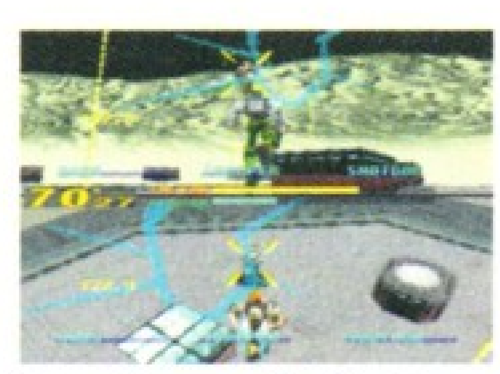
A choice of eight robots is initially at your disposal (the roster is boosted once the secrets have been activated) and each has a different range of weaponry, along with differing speed and agility. Each combatant is armed with a plasma sword for



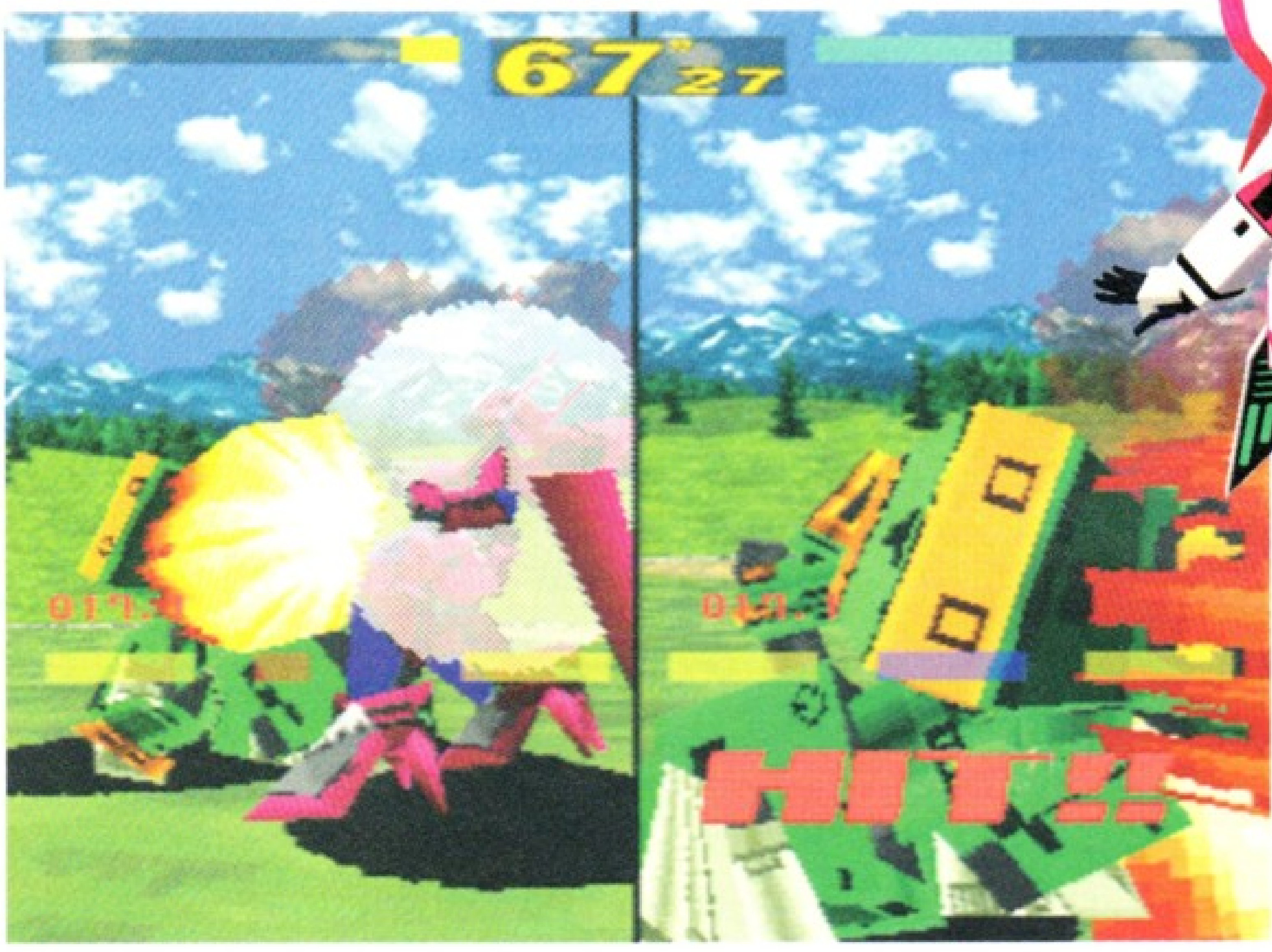
The Flooded City is the most open arena in the game.



In a word: sensational!



In another word: brilliant.





This here's Fei-Yen. She's fast, agile and a real pain in the ass to play against.

AM3 CAN DO NO WRONG!

You can't beat a bit of AM3 arcade gameplay can you? After the brilliance of Sega Rally Championship and now Virtual On, we've come to expect only the very best from this prolific developer and their pals in the CS game development department. The next title to issue forth from the same stable is Last Bronx. It's a 3D fighting game that uses the same GUARD-PUNCH-KICK controls as Virtua Fighter but features completely different gameplay, most notably in that the characters use weaponry. It's just been announced that Last Bronx will be one of the most important Saturn titles coming out way in 1997. Check News for first Saturn shots!



The two-player mode is absolutely amazing especially with the vertical split-screen.

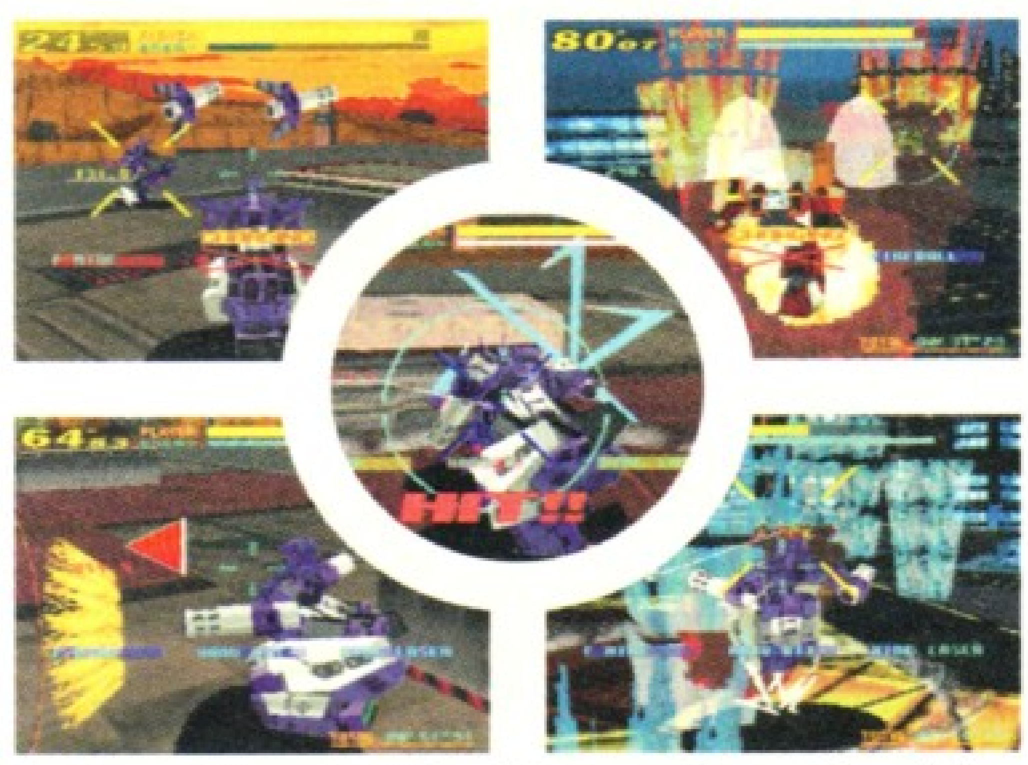
devastating close range combat (these are by far the most powerful weapons and are favoured by the faster robots) along with three different range weapons. Typically one is mounted per arm, with a "mega attack" activated by using both weapons simultaneously. Each robot also has booster capabilities with which to speed around along with the useful jump feature, which allows you to leap high into the air and scope your opponent out there.

The sheer scope in each of the robots' capabilities allows for some action which tests the old grey matter as well as the arcade reflexes. And that's really where Virtual On comes into it own. Each combatant has an Achilles Heel which must be ruthlessly exploited in order to be successful. The thing is, your opponent's vulnerabilities are often exposed just as they're firing off their most devastating attack!

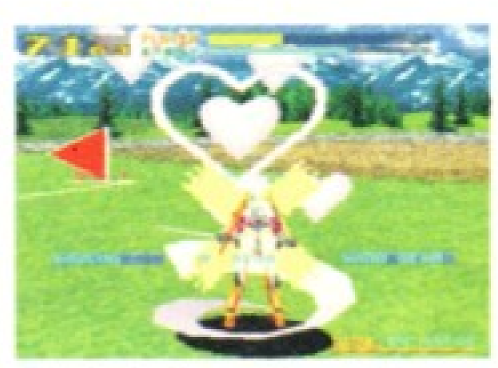
It's a bit difficult to describe just why Virtual On works so well. It's clear that AM3 have spent a great deal of time getting the game logic just right for the arcade version and this has been converted over to the Saturn extremely well. In fact, as arcade translations go, it's really difficult to fault this game. It may not have quite the resolution or fluidity of the arcade game and some of the conflagrations aren't quite as impressive, but the fact is that they're good enough. Coupled with the gameplay, it makes Virtual On an essential Saturn experience.

Virtual On might look a bit weird, but it's just brilliant. There's always room in the market for a new, excellent two-player game and this title hits the spot perfectly. Basically, yet another superb reason to buy a Saturn - the AM departments have done it again.

RICH LEADBETTER



You have to know what you're doing to get the most from V-On.



Fei-Yen's Hyper Heart Beam.



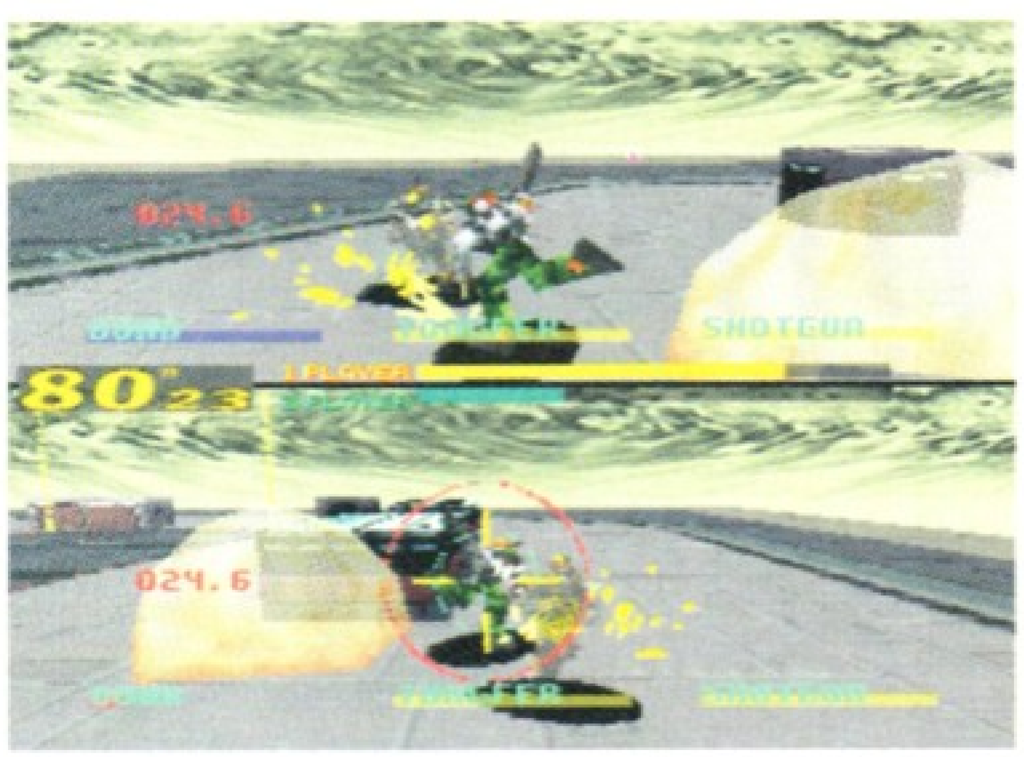
It's Fei-Yen again. She's hard.



Robo-Armageddon!



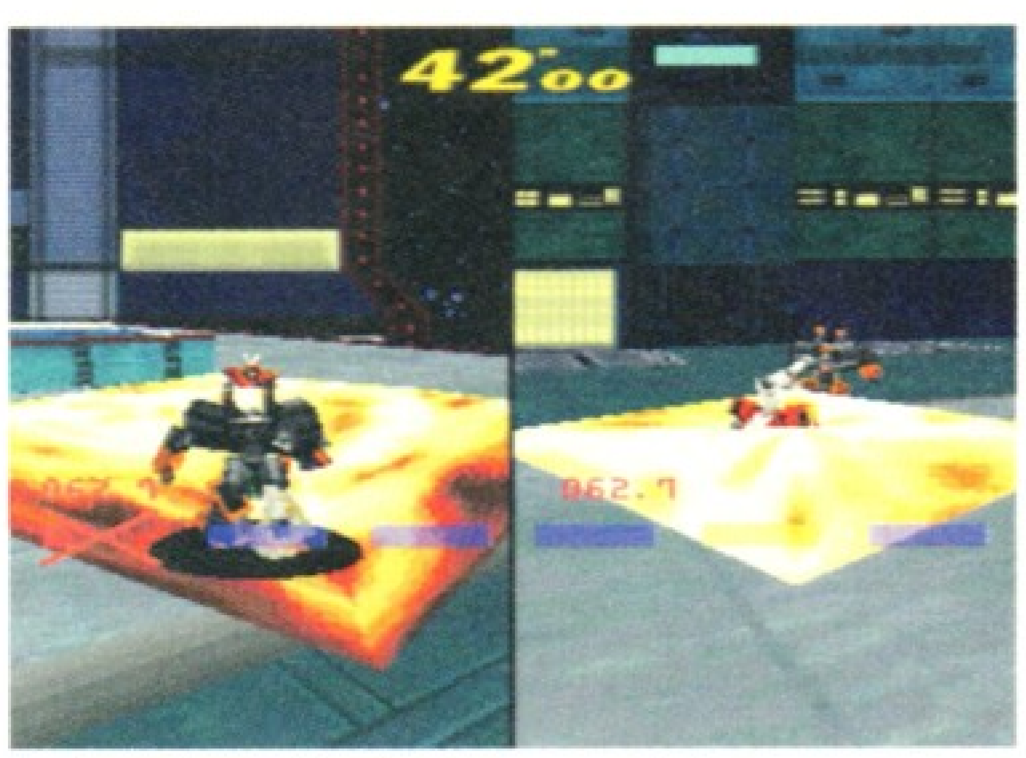
Raiden dishes out the power!



There's absolutely no loss of detail or speed in the two-player mode.



Play this level on our brilliant Cover CD this month!



Bombs can be used to absorb your enemy's beam weapons.

Yet another super-successful arcade translation from the masters. An excellent robot-battling title more than deserving of a place in your hallowed software collection.

graphics	91
sound	86
playability	94
lastability	93

overall 93%

BLAST CHAMBER

Ask any spectator at a municipal fireworks display and they'll tell you that nothing beats a good bang. But if that's the case, how come this explosion-based game isn't more fun?

BY	ACTIVISION
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	FUTURE SPORTS
RELEASE	DECEMBER



What wondrous prizes could encourage grown men to go bang?



Remember kids, never take the back door into a crematorium.

It takes a certain sort of person to enjoy a futuristic sport set inside a giant rotating cube, and Activision have set out to corner this particular sector of the market with the mighty Blast Chamber. Well, I say 'mighty', but that's only because it sounds good. In fact, 'mighty' isn't the most appropriate adjective to use in connection with this game, but before we get on to that, let's find out what this game has to offer the everyday gamesplayer in the street.

Blast Chamber is a game that can be played two ways, as a sort of every-man-for-himself future sport, and as a puzzle game. In the first variation you find yourself trapped in a cuboidular chamber with three other blokes (computer or - by the power of multi-tap - human-controlled). All four contenders are dressed in coloured uniforms with time bombs strapped to their backs. All four contenders also have their own timers, which, when they count down to zero, detonate the bomb and blast the wearer into slimy fragments.

There is only one way to save yourself from becoming a firework. A glowing crystal appears in the middle of the floor and you have to try to grab it, shoving your opponents to the deck if they get in your way. With the crystal in your possession you have two choices. You can either slam it into your own base, thus adding 25 seconds to your timer, or bring your opponents 20 seconds closer to disintegration by dropping it into one of their bases.

Complicating things somewhat is the fact that the bases are all situated around the walls and the ceiling of the chamber so they're not readily reachable to our gravity-bound gladiators. The only way to get to them is to walk into one of the green arrows in the corner of the chamber and thus spin the whole room through 90 degrees. This also sends your opponents tumbling, and if one of them has possession of the crystal when the chamber twists, he drops it and you get your chance to claim it.

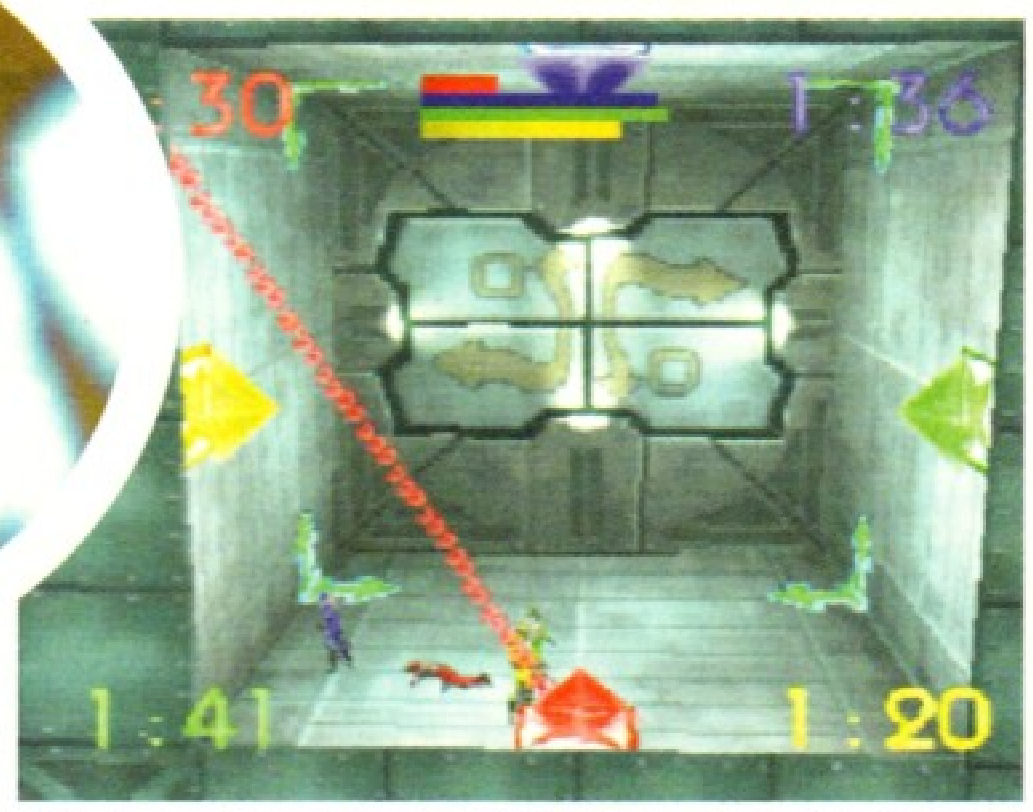
If you're playing the tournament mode the explodees are reintegrated almost immediately after detonation, and at the end of a time limit, whoever has gone bang the least is declared the winner. If you're playing elimination, though, there are no sec-

A most original future sport indeed, but does Blast Chamber succeed in the all-important gameplay department?





Run, yellow player, run! Run like the fool you are, for you have only 21 seconds left before the bomb strapped to your body blasts you into six million pieces! Ar-har-har-har!

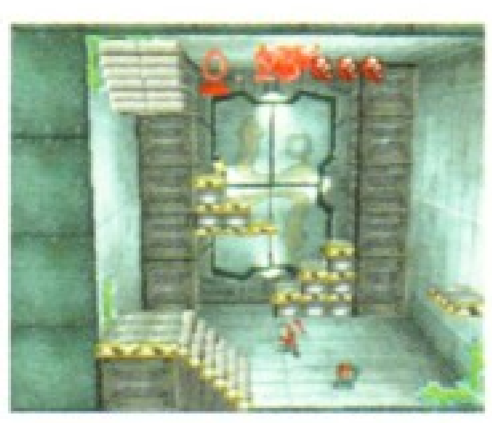


Yellow's reputation for pure evil is reinforced when he shoves the crystal in the red base, reducing Red's lifespan to 30 seconds!





Play in several exciting ways!







Foiled by a fiendish puzzle, the red player literally goes poof!

INSIDE THE BOOM-BOX

Having to run around inside a swivelling steel cube, looking for a glowing power crystal isn't a situation that a normal middle-class upbringing prepares you for, so here's a little visual 'walkthrough' to show you just how to cope if you ever find yourself in such circumstances. What we're looking at here, is the first of Blast Chamber's puzzle levels, in which you have to get that crystal down from the ceiling and over to the flashing red base.



There's the crystal up on that ledge... but how to get there?



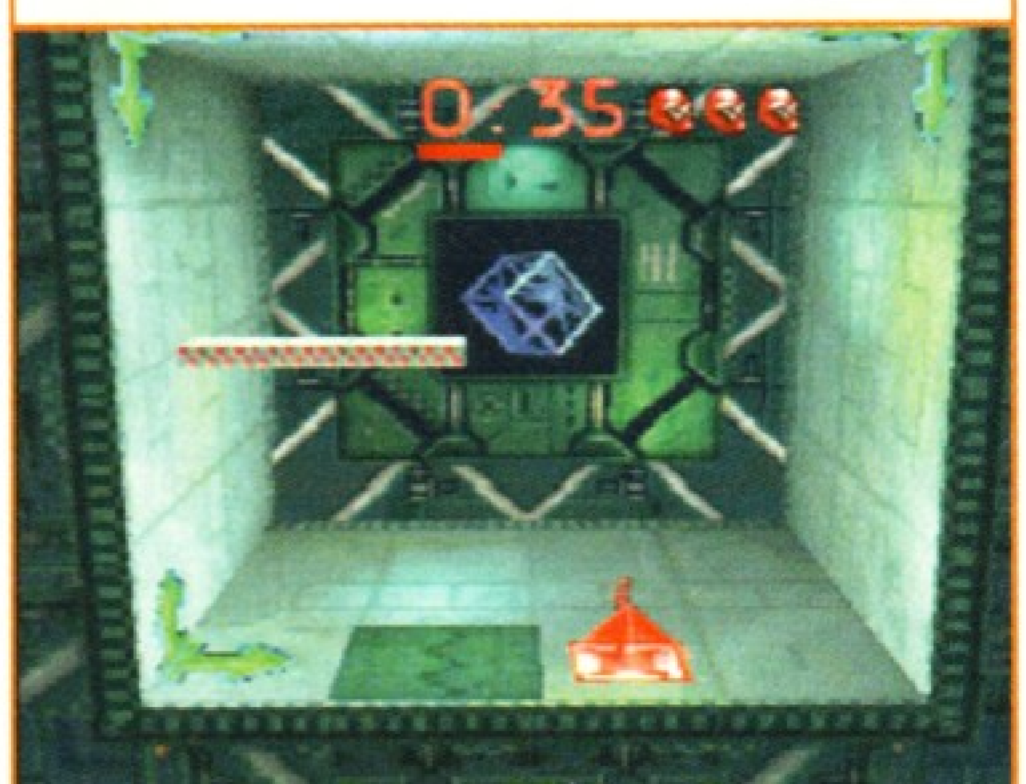
The chamber rotates and the crystal drops to the "floor"!



Crystal acquired! One more kick brings the base within reach!



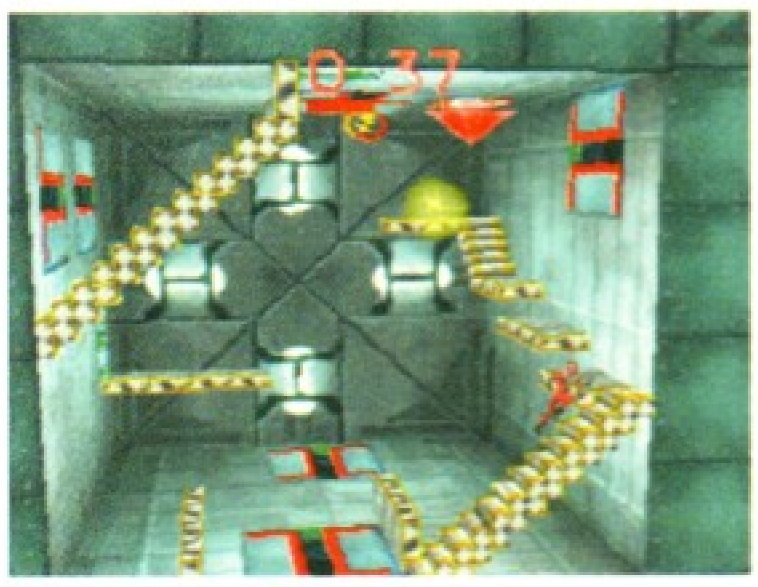
Our hero leaps the Razor-Jawed Pit of Death Plasma...



...And finally he stuffs the crystal into the base! Hurrah!



Twist the room and watch those fools tumble!



Good job I got that Step Exerciser for Christmas.



Phoo! What smells? Such green guffery indicates imminent immolation for one of our doomed competitors!





Beautiful, but deadly - like certain species of tropical fish. As the levels flick by they grow ever fancier... and ever more difficult to solve!

ond chances and the game keeps going until there's only one player left.

This may well sound thrilling in an old-fashioned, simple-minded, Speedball kind of way, but whereas Speedball was entertaining and required some degree of skill, the gameplay here is more free-form and shambolic. The problem really lies in the weedy sprites which, when they come together in a bundle, suddenly become indistinguishable and unmanageable. You can shove away at your opponents and sometimes it seems to work and sometimes it doesn't. They fall! They sprawl! But who has the ball!? Or crystal, even? It's so hard to tell! Bah, this bit is no fun.

Saving Blast Chamber from total embarrassment, though, is the second game variation. Here you find yourself alone in a chamber full of platforms, staircases, spikes and elevators. Hidden in some out-of-the-way, hard-to-reach place there's a crystal, and it's up to you to work out how to claim it then get it back to your base before that nasty bomb timer hits zero. These levels start out easy but they soon get very tricky indeed and after a few rounds you need to work out complex routes across perilous arrays of traps, disappearing bridges and bouncing boxes. Power-up pods also appear to boost your jumping ability or time limit so you also need to work how best to use these to complete the level.

Clever though this part of the game is, it too is dogged by problems. Blast Chamber's controls are a touch too vague to give the precise, against-the-clock manoeuvring required for a time-limited, platform-puzzle game. Also, the 3D viewpoint doesn't always give an accurate indication of where you are in the cube so you sometimes find yourself wasting precious seconds jumping at platforms that aren't where you thought they were. On several occasions I was pushing at the arrows on the walls trying to rotate the chamber but with no effect - until I nudged my little guy couple of pixels to the left or right. How annoying.

I can imagine Blast Chamber's designers believing they had come up with a great game idea that made a clever and unusual use of the Saturn's 3D graphics hardware. In principle it is a good idea - or at least the puzzle part of the game is - but all the smart thinking has been undermined by some dodgy execution. With a bit more play-testing and tweaking this could have been respectable, but as it stands Blast Chamber is a damp squib.

PAUL GLANCEY

Not so much a bang as a whimper. The puzzle section is the strongest part of Blast Chamber, but even that fails to provide explosive entertainment.

graphics	65
sound	79
playability	60
lastability	67

overall **63%**

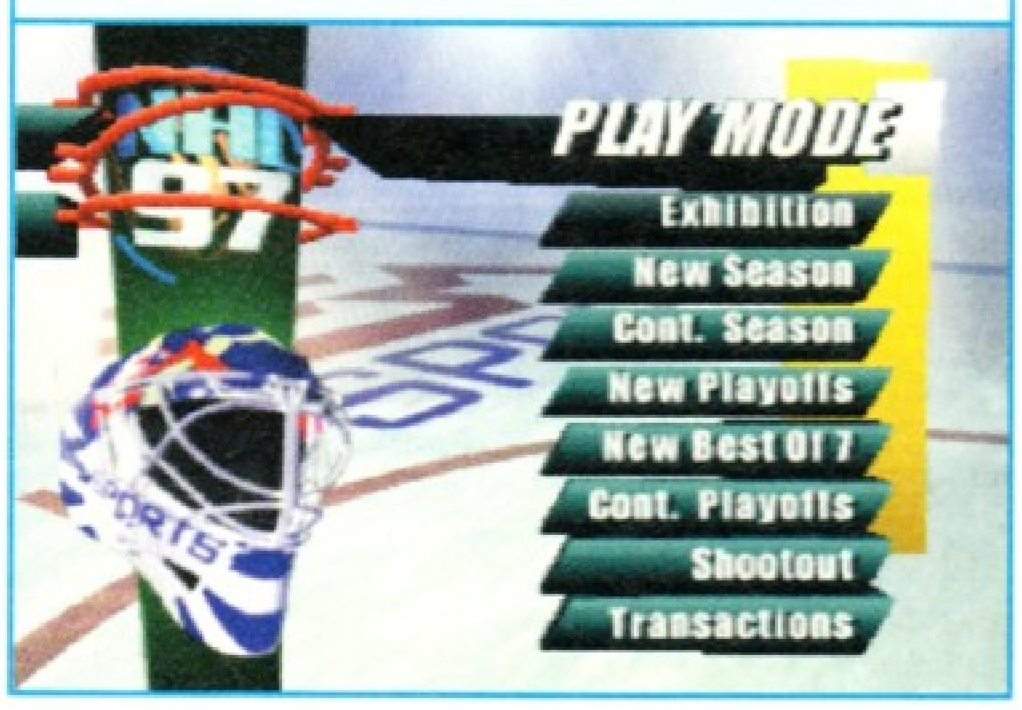
NHL HOCKEY '97

Electronic Arts initiate their barrage of sports titles on the Saturn - here's a conversion of one of their most respected of Megadrive titles... And it's all in 3D!

BY	EA
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	HOCKEY
RELEASE	OUT NOW

WHAT THE PUCK?!?

Upon loading NHL Hockey '97 you are immediately bewildered with a vast array of options to wade through after an impressive full-motion video intro. The first order of business is to choose exactly what kind of game you want to play. NHL has it all - an entire season (which you can save off to memory and resume later), play-offs and shoot-out contests. Pretty impressive stuff. You can even engage in a bit of gambling in the volatile player transfer market or create your own players.





The players close in for the first face-off.



An overhead view of the face-off.



And it's a goal just after six minutes of ice hockey action!

I remember when EA Hockey first arrived on the Megadrive, waaaay back in the early days of my reviewing career. It was a revelation. Finally, someone had been able to incorporate the speed, skill and rampant violence of Ice Hockey into a Megadrive game. Coming from the home of John Madden Football, it's not surprising that it was brilliant.

After numerous sequels (most of which weren't as good as the original), EA have moved onto the 32-bit systems and this whole sequel business looks set to begin again. Still, since this is the first Saturn version we can at least benefit from an all-new game engine.

In this regard as well, NHL Hockey is pretty damn good actually. EA have managed to upgrade their Virtual Stadium technology from last year's FIFA title and have created a believable 3D environment that actually moves fairly smoothly and at an acceptable speed. This is essential for such a high-velocity sport as Hockey, so at least the basics are there for a game that improves on the realism and enjoyment of the original 16-bit games.

Being EA Sports there's the usual presentation guff - a whole bunch of full-motion video sequences designed to lead you into the game and enhance the atmosphere. The quality here is adequate, but since us UK gamers don't really give that much of a toss about this frippery and more often than not, the START button is used to get us straight into the action. More useful presentation takes the form of the usual super-anal EA Sports options and stats. EA are notorious for

The control system is very similar indeed to the original EA Hockey on Megadrive - which isn't too shabby.



The 3D update is very smooth indeed.





A great deal of camera views are on offer, as you have come to expect from an EA Sports title. The default view is best though (as is pretty much always the case).





The intelligent camera views make the whole thing gel together very well.

It's a shot on goal!

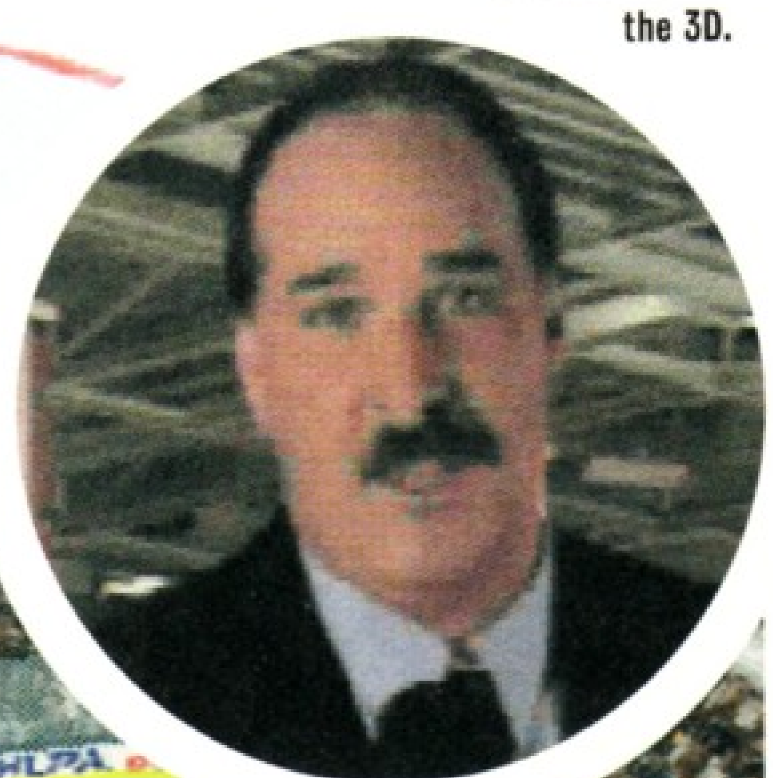




There are some nice reflection effects on the edge of the rink.



The "helmet camera" provides a pretty wobbly experience, but you get to see the sheer detail on the 3D.





This is a goal celebration affair thing.



Just after the face-off the camera zooms out for the inevitable shot on goal.



Much scrambling about on the defensive as the reds repel a full-on strike from the opposing team.



I think you've got the idea...



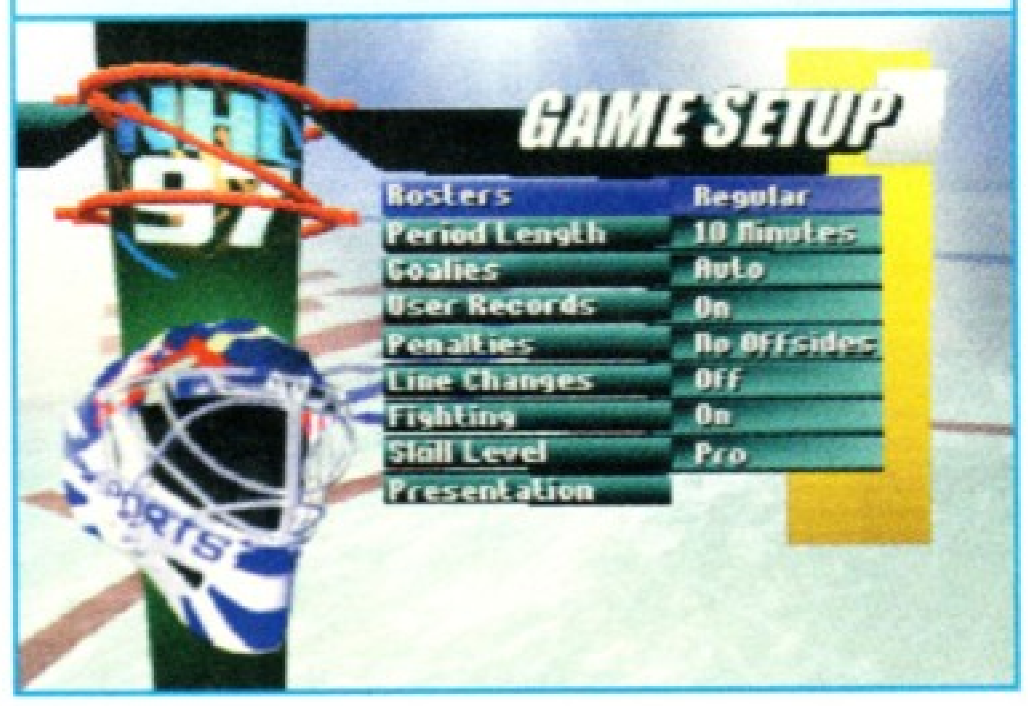
... But here are some more...



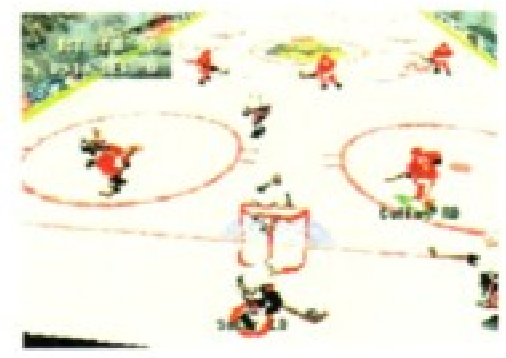
... pictures any way. Coo.

TO THE GAME PROPER

Just when you think the options frenzy is over (in that you've pressed START to get past the first range of selectables), more of the buggers appear on-screen for your perusal. These are the actual in-game options, incorporating things like time duration, auto goalies (on/off), fighting (again on/off) and three skill levels. There's even a presentation sub-menu here within which you can change sound levels, get rid of the FMV, silence the crowd, that kind of thing. Good eh? Well, no, it's a bit much really. But some people like all this.









Aha... so this will be another of those face-offs then.





The EA Sports **Virtual Stadium technology** provides a fast and smooth **3D environment.**

being super-precise in terms of teams, names and game variations and Ice Hockey nuts are unlikely to feel really let down here.

The thing is, here in the UK, we're more concerned about gameplay over and above the stats and what-have-you. And in this regard, NHL Hockey works pretty well. The feeling of skating over the ice is just as good as the Megadrive original and the control method is pretty much the same. That makes it very easy to get into for people who've played the originals.

The bottom line is, does NHL really warrant purchase? A distinction of EA titles is that they're usually first into the market - but not this time. Virgin have entered the fray with PowerPlay Hockey and although the EA effort is probably superior in terms of presentation and optionary, I have to say that I prefer the Virgin title (ever-so-slightly) when it comes down to graphics and gameplay. And in the final analysis, that's what's more important.

RICH LEADBETTER



As if you hadn't guessed, here J Arnott has scored.



Surely not a face-off?



Well, yes actually.

A fine example of an ice hockey simulation, graphically impressive and pretty playable. Bodes well for the future of EA Sports.

graphics	82
sound	80
playability	83
lastability	86

overall **84%**

REVIEW

COMMAND & CONQUER

Don't be fooled by the simplistic graphics. This game is one of the all-time greats - a classic release right up there with the very best of Saturn titles. Command and Conquer is a revelation.

BY	VIRGIN/WESTWOOD
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	STRATEGY
RELEASE	DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 94%







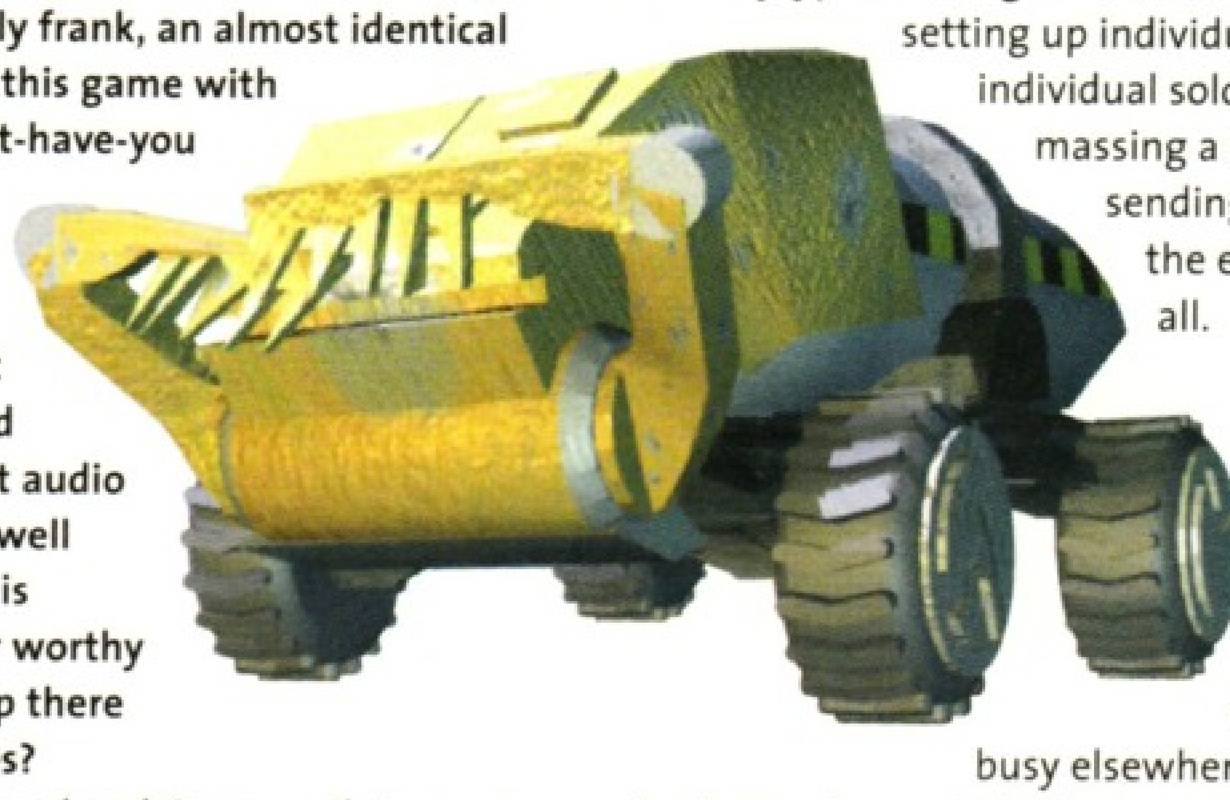
Select to act as the GDI and you're immediately thrown into the thick of the action. Troops arrive via sea and it's your job to use them to exterminated NOD terrorists over to the left. That boat houses a mean cannon.

IT'S A BIT LIKE...

When I first sat down to play Command and Conquer, I thought that being a strategy game it would take ages to get into. Not so. In actual fact the game bears an incredible resemblance to another Westwood title, Dune 2: Battle for Arrakis. That's no bad thing, because that game was one of the most accessible and enjoyable titles ever released for the 16-bit machine. C&C is much the same, just with a greater range of tasks and missions, along with far superior presentation - as befits a 32-bit machine like the Saturn.



Command and Conquer is one of those game concepts that defies technology. To be perfectly frank, an almost identical version of this game with all of the FMV and what-have-you could probably be done on the Mega-CD. The graphics are small and well-animated, but nothing spectacular and apart from some decent audio CD tracks, the sound is well below average. So why is Command and Conquer worthy of a score that puts it up there with AM2's finest games?



It's simple - Command and Conquer thrives on deceptively simple gameplay. You can achieve so much with so little effort it becomes a joy to play. The point and click interface is exceptionally easy to use, even with a joypad. Taking control of entire battalions and setting up individual commands for individual soldiers is as easy as massing a crack attack force and sending them off to crush the enemy once and for all.

This is all made even easier by the inclusion of some excellent artificial intelligence. If your soldiers are attacked and you're busy elsewhere, your troops think for themselves, retaliating or running depending on their strength. That self-same AI is also responsible for some excellent and involving battles with the CPU-



The FMV builds up the story really well indeed.





Some more luvverly activities via the wonders of FMV.



The FMV is a bit grainy compared to the likes of Virtual On and Gun Griffon.

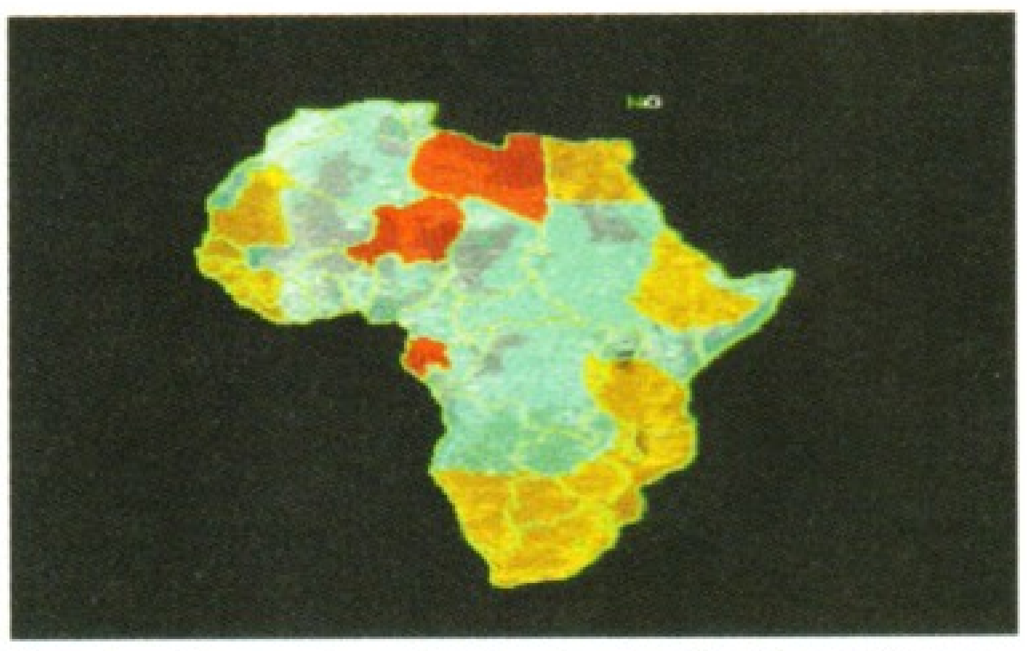


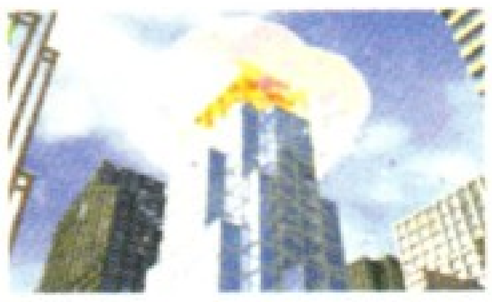
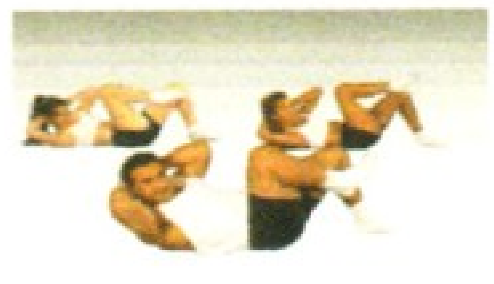
But these sequences are all about advancing the story. Which they do extremely well.



A ragtag collection of buildings put together as a NOD base on one of the earlier levels. Get two refineries to maximise Tiberium harvests.




Every level the map is updated to show territorial acquisitions.


Channel hopping from the FMV intro (four pictures above).


Barracks under attack!


Raising a standing army.


Leadership 94%, Efficiency 70% - that's Rich all right.

IT'S ON TWO CDS!

For a game that's as visually simple as Command and Conquer is, it's a tad surprising that the whole shebang is spread over TWO CDs! But why? Well, being a supreme strategy title, C&C allows you to become either of the two major sides in the conflict, each with their own missions and full-motion video. Because there's so much of the damn FMV, two discs are required. The good thing is that since both discs are essentially different games there's never any disc-swapping. Instead, you just choose which side you want to be when you choose your CD. Easy. And indeed peasy.

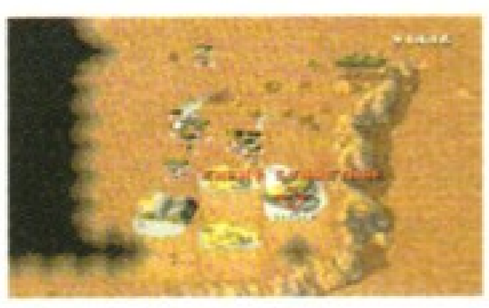
A simple game yet utterly absorbing, Command and Conquer is simply a massively addictive videogame.



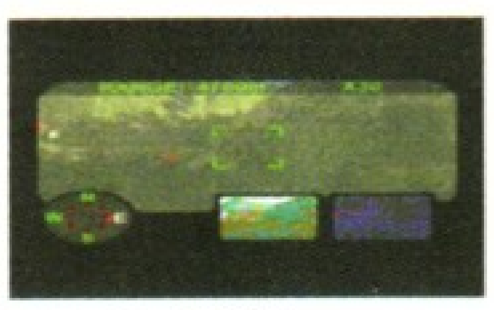
A nice small base from an early GDI level.


A very badly constructed base here to the left. Tut tut tut.




Action with the NOD guys.

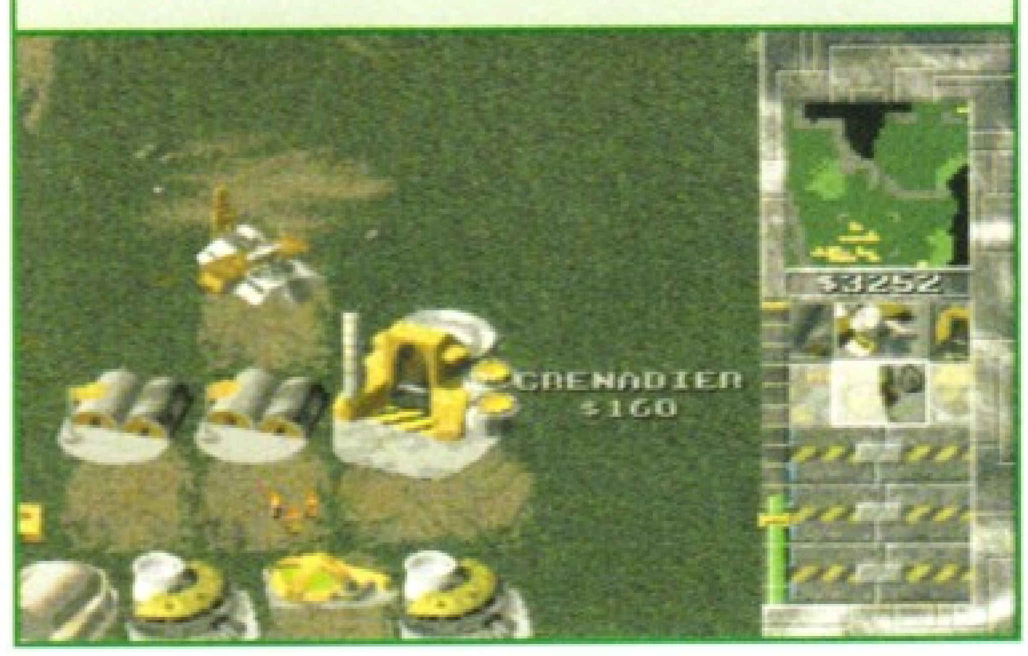



A nice bit of FMV here.


A nice GDI base construction going on here.

CONSTRUCTION TIME AGAIN

One of the reasons why Command and Conquer is so ace is because as well as the fighting elements, there is also a kind of Sim City style bit to it. On most of the levels, your task is to build up a base of operations and use it to create troops and harvest the surrounding area of value minerals. Good base construction and prioritising which bits to add to it at what times are the marks of a good C&C player.



controlled enemy forces. The Saturn-led forces are no push-over, there are missions which you'll spend days at a time getting a handle on. And that's the other joy with Command and Conquer. Westwood have obviously a huge amount of time devising every aspect of the missions in the game - even the earlier, simpler assignments are classy whilst the latter tasks are masterpieces of gaming design. That's something extremely rare to behold on a videogame created outside of Japan these days.



There is very little to complain about with this game - as the box-out on this page states, you even get to choose your side with each having their own range of tasks - adding still further to what is already a supremely lastable game.

In fact, the only slight moan I have (apart from the grating sound effects which do become excessively irritating) is the unfortunate omission of the PC version's multiplayer mode. A link-up option or NetLink facility would have firmly put this well up in the leagues of NiGHTS and Virtua Fighter 2 as ultimate software which MUST be owned. As it is, even without it, Command and Conquer isn't far off this realm of excellence. Which certainly isn't bad for a game you could do on the Mega-CD...

RICH LEADBETTER

It might not look like much from the screenshots, but take it from us: Command and Conquer is an easy-to-get-into, utterly compelling and extremely absorbing game. One which you should buy immediately.

graphics	78
sound	69
playability	96
lastability	95
overall	94%

SEGA AGES

Sega's latest arcade conversions finally hit home! So what do we have? Virtua Fighter 3? GunBlade NY? Last Bronx perhaps? No. Try timewarping back into the last decade and checking out the delights of Space Harrier, Afterburner and OutRun!

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	RETRO
RELEASE	DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 91%



Afterburner was designed to be the ultimate in arcade excitement when it was first released.





Although predating Afterburner by two years, the similar Space Harrier actually has superior design.

SPACE HARRIER

Released in 1985, Space Harrier revolutionised arcade graphics. With its distinctive chequer-board landscapes and incredible (for the time) scaling sprites, this game was the ultimate coin-op - enhanced by a brilliant hydraulic cabinet keyed to the responses of the joystick. In this regard, Space Harrier set the precedent for brilliant arcade cabinets. A simple blast by today's standards, but in its time Space Harrier was cutting edge technology - the Virtua Fighter 3 of the mid-eighties, if you will.



On Saturn, you get a virtually identical conversion. Everything is present and correct including resolution, speed and playability. A masterful conversion of a game still strangely compelling despite the ancient gameplay.

Sega have led the arcade field since the days of Frogger and Turbo, two epoch-making videogames. However, the company's prolific R&D arcade departments really came to the fore with the development of sprite-scaling technology which allowed for some of the most amazing "3D" graphics ever seen.

Whilst opposing companies were still shovelling out scrolling shooters and platform titles, Sega took the game to the next level, totally outquaffing everything everyone else was doing at the time. Just as they are now with the new Model 3 technology.

The Sega Ages pack (volume one) takes three of the most popular arcade games of all-time and shoves them onto one CD. What you get for your forty quid are virtually arcade-perfect representations of Space Harrier, Afterburner and Outrun.

The former two games have been converted pretty well to Megadrive and 32X in the past, and as such, really don't merit so much attention. Suffice to say that Space Harrier is totally arcade-perfect, still playable and still worth a blast. Afterburner is just short of arcade-perfect, but again, it's uncannily similar to the original. Like the coin-op, there's little depth

In their day, these games were the equivalent to VF3 in terms of technical innovation. And they were produced by AM2 as well!



OutRun was Yu Suzuki's finest hour before Virtua Racing.



OutRun even has remixes of the excellent arcade music.





Just like the original!



Multiple routes through here.



The bonus canyon strafing run from Afterburner.



A plane from behind catches the F-14 unawares. Bang.



Engaging the eponymous afterburners.



Reload and get more missiles.



There's a bit of an art to dodging incoming enemy missiles in Afterburner, particularly on later stages.

Of the three games, OutRun still shines as an excellent game, with Space Harrier and Afterburner providing the extra value.

but the adrenalin rush is still there. Afterburner was always been a favourite of mine, and it still is. Suffice to say, when the Japanese import turned up a couple of months ago, it mysteriously "vanished".

But OutRun eh? Everyone old enough to remember the 1986 classic has fond memories of this brilliant game, and it's great to see that the game still holds its own. Sure, it's no Sega Rally, but the game still has legions of fans and this Saturn version is the closest version EVER. And it's about time.

Like the Bubble Bobble pack I reviewed a couple of months ago, it's clear that this won't be everyone's cup of tea. These aren't the games you bought your Saturn to play. However, there's something about these old games that I love, and you do get your value here (in Japan, the games were sold separately, believe it or not so European gamers actually benefit for a change!). The bottom line is, these bygone classics are still pretty ace games and if you're a longtime arcade player, you're going to love this - hence my personal recommendation, which the pack would have got for OutRun alone!

RICH LEADBETTER



Easter Island statues strike!





The first Space Harrier boss.





Space Harrier redefined the arcade experience when it was released in 1984 - its contemporaries were 2D, graphically unsophisticated titles. Sega had started a revolution.

OUTRUN

Recognised as being the most successful coin-op of the eighties, OutRun took the Space Harrier "Super Scaler" technology and adapted it for use in a driving game. Not surprisingly, the graphics amazed all who saw them, but the real innovation was in the soundtrack, which was based on Yu Suzuki's desire to get studio-quality music into videogames. Innovation in the gameplay (such as decent power drift and opposing cars travelling at different speeds) coupled with sheer atmosphere made OutRun a deserved classic. The Saturn version is as close to arcade perfect as you would expect and like all of the Sega Ages games, it's all loaded at once, so no CD access! Hurrah.



AFTERBURNER

In catching the imagination of arcade-goers, Sega turned their eyes to Hollywood and used the Super Scaler technology to basically bring Top Gun to the arcades. The most adrenaline-packed game of the time, Afterburner was again an audio-video feast combined with what was the ultimate hydraulic cabinet of the time. Limited in terms of gameplay, Afterburner was still an enormous hit and it still just damn exciting to play. The Saturn conversion is probably the least faithful on the Sega Ages pack, with some resolution lacking, but the audio-visual hits are still there.



If you like your retro, you can't go far wrong with this. Space Harrier and Afterburner are fairly cool - OutRun is still brilliant. All three of them on one CD makes this a great purchase.

graphics	83
sound	93
playability	91
lastability	90
overall	91%

MIGHTY HITS

The Virtua Gun renaissance continues. As if Virtua Cop 2 wasn't enough, Sega have seen fit to support its plastic sharp-shooter with Mighty Hits, an intriguing collection of games that may well make your head hurt.

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£29.99
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	DECEMBER



A lone stranger rides into town on his comedic steed... ...and trashes the joint. John Wayne eat your heart out.

TOY TRAINS

One of the hardest games in Mighty Hits. Trains plunge in and out of four tunnels and you have to shoot the blue carriages whilst avoiding the red ones. It's not as easy as it sounds and I've never got this one right.. Never. Not that I'm crap at games or anything.



PORTRAITS

Since the preview, we've got this one sussed. Shoot at the falling pictures to rack up points, but if you hit one with a red frame you lose a point. Since there aren't many red ones, just shoot the lot and you'll win anyway.



PENGUIN

There's a Penguin trapped in the ice. Blast at the ice to set him free, but each hit causes the ice floe he's sitting on to spin round, meaning careful timing needs to be employed to succeed. A simple, but tricky game.





So far, every Saturn gun game has relied on the same bad-guy-shootin', into-the-screen-scrollin' tomfoolery that made the original Virtua Cop so damned funky, but Mighty Hits takes a refreshingly new approach. Instead of just offering relentless blasting action, Mighty Hits contains twenty sub-games which offer relentless blasting action. Admittedly some of them are slightly more cerebral, but the blasting bit remains a central theme. This is a Good Thing, because otherwise it would make for a pretty pointless Virtua Gun game. And we wouldn't want that.

The sub-games are a disparate bunch, as you can see from the box outs, so a scenario of sorts is provided to tie it all together. As the game originates from Japan, you can expect weirdness, but in Mighty Hits the programmers have outdone themselves. Coming on like an LSD fuelled Western, the intro shows assorted cartoon characters in the midst of a saloon heist. The hold-up is halted as the cast literally go to pieces and the bar collapses on top of them. Mad.

The characters in the intro also serve to guide you through the game, by giving instructions on each game and then cringing as you foul it up horribly. At

Clearly a bright, vibrant piece of software with some nice 3D but is Mighty Hits worth any more than a cursory investigation?



The 'taxing' final stage.



The knights salute as you hit the bullseye. No really, they do.



Blow away these falling cards.



This is bizarre beyond belief.



Destroy picture frames like there's no tomorrow.



One of these items reappears in a different place each time the screen updates. But I can't remember which item. Dang.



You have to shoot the bee here. If you can see it...



You never get the one you want. Never.



We're crap at this.



Cans. Just like in the movies.



Shoot the Jack-in-the-Boxes. Have no mercy. Kill. Maim.

The deluge of gun games continues with the arrival of Mighty Hits! But does this match up to the brilliance of the Virtua Cop games?



Shoot the balloons to land the little fella on the raft. Or just dunk him in the briny.





the start of each 'round' you select three stages by shooting at cards that rapidly flip through the available games. As the level of difficulty increases, so do the time limits and number of points required, until you reach a point where it's almost impossible to succeed. Get through to the end and you get to play the perilous final stage, which involves a ball and eight seconds to shoot it to pieces. No missiles, or tanks, or anything. Just the ball.

Mighty Hits is a decent enough idea, but when it comes down to it, it's just not all that fun. Sure the attraction of something different for the Virtua Gun holds your interest for five minutes, but once you've played all the games and pulled your hair out at the ridiculous time limits there's not much incentive to keep playing. The only slight redemption is the two player versus mode, but even that isn't a bundle of laughs; real two player hi-jinks are best left to proper puzzle games like Bust-a-Move 2. It's not terrible, but it is pretty much pointless. Rather lacking in the point department, actually.

STEPHEN FULLJAMES





Shoot the balls the clown is juggling to change their colour. Sadly you can't just shoot the clown.

FACE PUZZLE

A bit like a Rubik's cube, we suppose. Revolve the nine blocks by shooting at them to reveal the face of one of the game's comedy characters. And repeat. Wait for this to appear as a Games Master Celebrity Challenge.



TOYS

'Shoot the unnecessary part of the toy' proclaim the instructions. Yes, it's mutant teddy action ahoy as you have to waste the part of each toy that obviously doesn't fit in. Like the frog with extra robot legs. Ugh, scary.



CLOCKS

Quite tricky. Three pocket watches are swinging backwards and forwards like pendulums. You have just the one bullet to nail all three clocks at once. You will fail, you will.



BOTTLES

You have just eight seconds to complete this one. Some fancy shooting required then? Actually no, just wait for the top to fly off one of the five bottles, then shoot the corresponding bottle. And that's it. D'oh.







It's cheap, it's weird, it's different and it's not as if is fatally flawed or anything. It's just that Mighty Hits starts to drag pretty quickly and if you don't possess a Virtua Gun it is spectacularly without point.

graphics	72
sound	68
playability	78
lastability	71
overall	67%

TETRIS PLUS

It's Tetris, that simple-yet-brilliant block-arranging puzzle game. What more can we possibly tell you? Y'know, Tetris, that game that everyone can whistle the music to. It's Tetris for chrissakes. Read on.

BY	JALECO
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	PUZZLE
RELEASE	DECEMBER

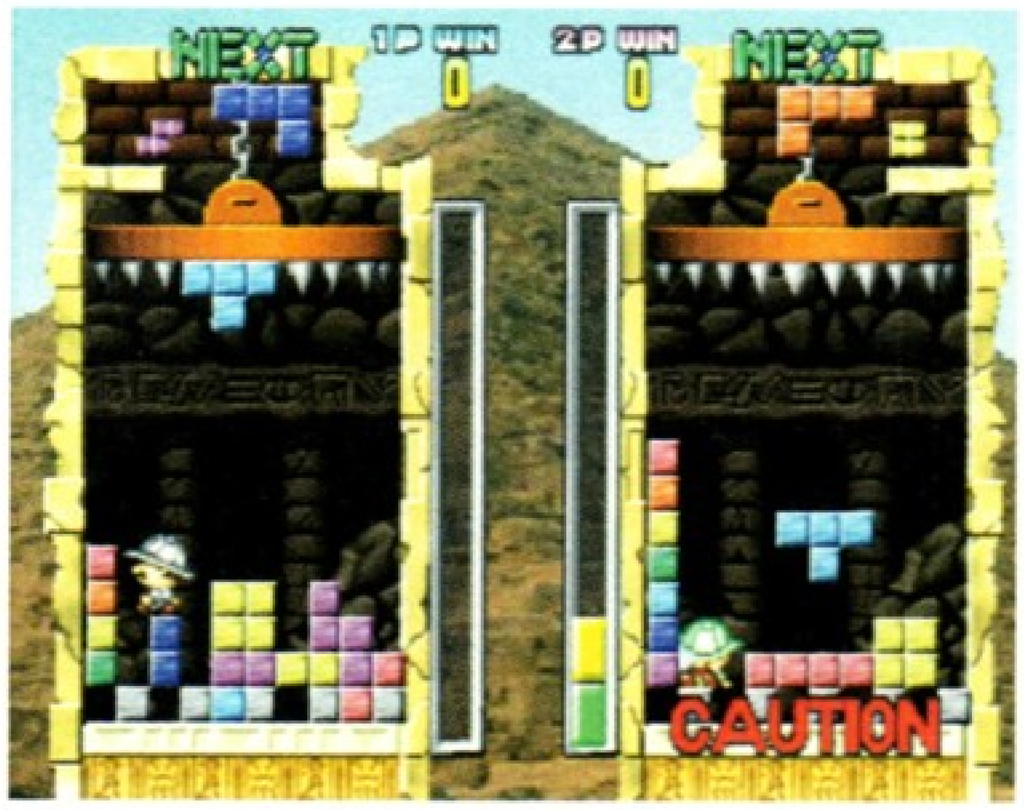
RAIDERS OF THE LOST CAR PARK

Our intrepid puzzle mode explorers are dead set on discovering the world's greatest lost treasures, whether the treasures want it or not. As you can see from this intro sequence, it sets things up marvelously for each game, but strangely enough it's the same plot wherever in the world the archaeologically minded duo are. It's a funny old world, isn't it?

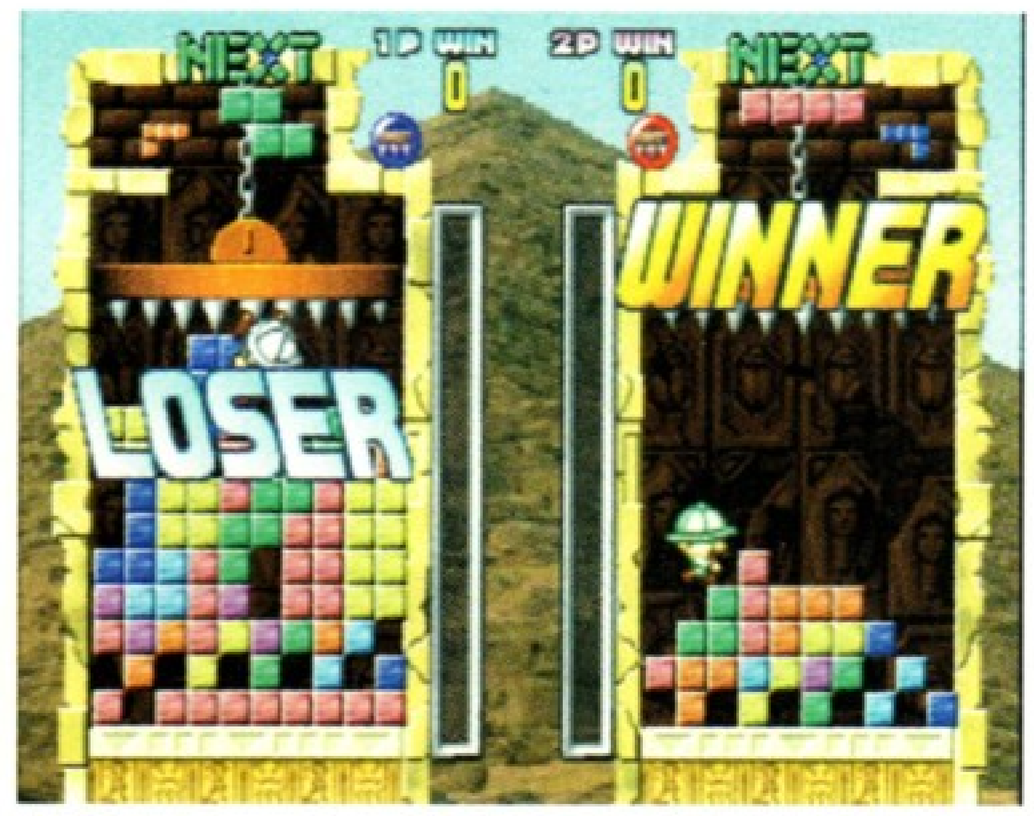








This is Tetris Plus, with nutty professor add-ons.



Here the left professor dies a slow, lingering death.

After years of being confined to the tiny, plastic shell of the GameBoy, Tetris has finally broken free and legged it for the relative comfort of the Saturn. But what can the dual processors and other fancy whatnot of Sega's 32-bit beast do for a game that is, in essence, just a few blocks moving down the screen? To be quite honest, not that much. Unless you take a radically different approach, like the recent Super NES Tetris Attack, Tetris will always just be, well, Tetris. But having said that, there are an assortment of play modes to keep you occupied through those long winter nights

For starters there's Classic mode, which is your bog-standard common or garden Tetris. Fit the falling blocks together to make lines. The more lines you get at once, the more points you score. As you get more lines the action gradually speeds up until eventually you're playing at a frenetic pace. If the blocks reach the top of the screen, it's game over. Although it is possible to have two player games in this mode, your actions do not affect the state of your opponent's window, which is a bit stupid really. There is a full blown





This here's the puzzle mode. Tetris Plus allows you to create your own puzzles too, although if there isn't anybody else around to solve them it's a bit pointless.

two-player mode, but more on that later.

Next up we have the Puzzle mode, which has probably been included in an effort to keep up with the Joneses, or in this case, the Bust-a-Move series. This mode introduces a cartoon professor and his assistant. They are exploring archeological sites around the world, but every time they seem to come up against a fiendish puzzle based on lots of falling blocks in a well type arrangement. Criminy! It sounds just like Tetris. The basic object of these games is to rescue the Prof by clearing a stage with a preset arrangement of blocks. As you drop more blocks, the Professor climbs up on top of them, and to spice up the proceedings, a whirling blade of death slowly descends into the stage, mincing blocks and errant explorers alike. Should the Prof get pureed, it's game over again.

The two player mode is based on the puzzle mode, in that it uses the same type of playfield, with the Professor, whirling blade of doom, and preset collections of blocks. This time, however, each line you make causes more blocks to appear on your opponents side. So if you get a Tetris, expect howls of deri-

The greatest puzzle game of the Nineties arrives on Saturn... But was it really worth the time and effort?



Tetris on the Saturn eh? It's not a bad idea but...





... Bust-A-Move 2 and Baku Baku are more enjoyable.











Here's the full range of options and stuff in Tetris Plus.



Classic Tetris come back!





What's all this manga stuff?



Oh dear oh dear.



This is more like it. Tetris as it SHOULD be played.

sion from the other player as his or her Prof gets rapidly shoved bladewards. The thing is, two player game never last too long, because of a combination of the larger blocks used in the puzzle mode and the descending blades. This means that if you're after a drawn-out tactical battle, you'll be disappointed.

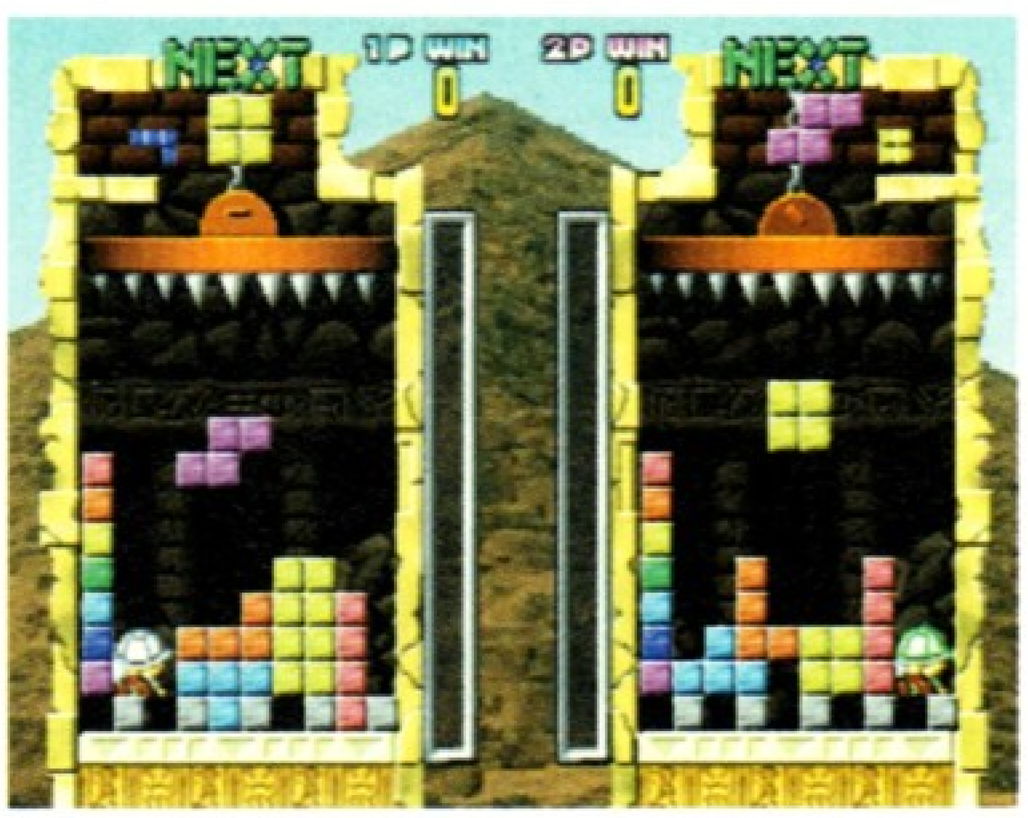
But there's yet more! Tetris Plus also contains an Edit mode, where you can create your own fiendish puzzle stages with which to infuriate yourself and friends alike. You can store up to ten of these home-made stages in the Saturn's memory at one time, and you can specify every possible parameter; from the position and colour of the blocks, to the starting position of the Prof and the whirling blades of death that inevitably form his untimely demise.

So on the face of it, it would seem that Tetris Plus offers everything a puzzle fiend could possibly desire. But in reality, it's not quite as peachy. Somehow a game that was fast and playable on the GameBoy is slightly jerky on the Saturn. It's only a smidgen of jerkiness, but it's enough to put you off, and the 'lag' between a block hitting bottom and sticking there is a little too long, so you often end up shifting it left or right when you really meant to be moving the next block. Then there's the puzzle mode, which is a nice idea, but is slightly less than great for the same reasons. And a couple more. The blocks used in this mode a quite a lot bigger than in Classic Mode, so obviously less of them fit on the screen and games don't last as long. Then there's the Professor/Blades of Death double act which starts to get on your nerves pretty quickly. As the blade falls, it destroys any blocks in its way, meaning that you can never foul up by reaching the top of the well. The Professor always climbs up the tallest pile of blocks, as if he wants to get get minced; and as you have no control over his actions, you often feel a bit cheated.

The game also looks basic, and while flashy graphical effects are not really a prerequisite for puzzle games, it's simply not as pretty as Bust-a-Move 2. The Professor and his sidekick are cute but titchy, and the whole impression you get looking at the game is that it's simply "okay", and certainly nothing to get excited about.

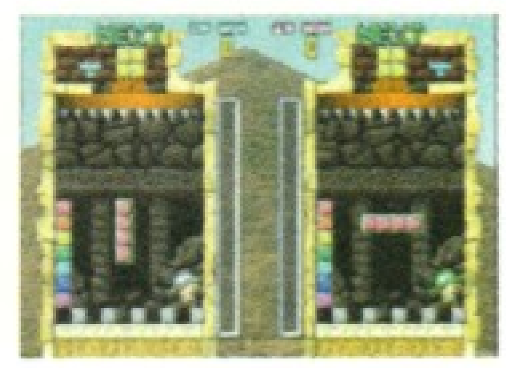
STEPHEN FULLJAMES

Tetris Plus is well-presented and playable but it's just perhaps a bit too long in the tooth for Saturn owners.



Tetris Plus introduces an interesting spin to the old game...

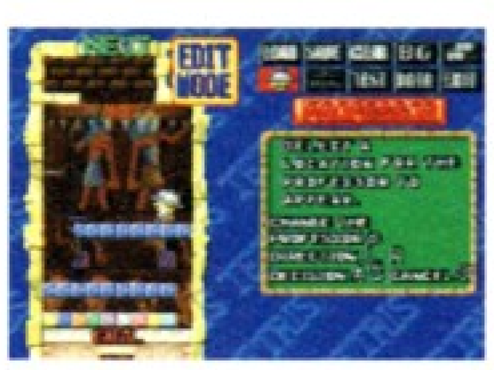






... Tetris Classic is still the preferred game in our opinion.





This here's the Edit Mode – another addition to the basic Tetris game. And not a particularly interesting one if the truth be told.

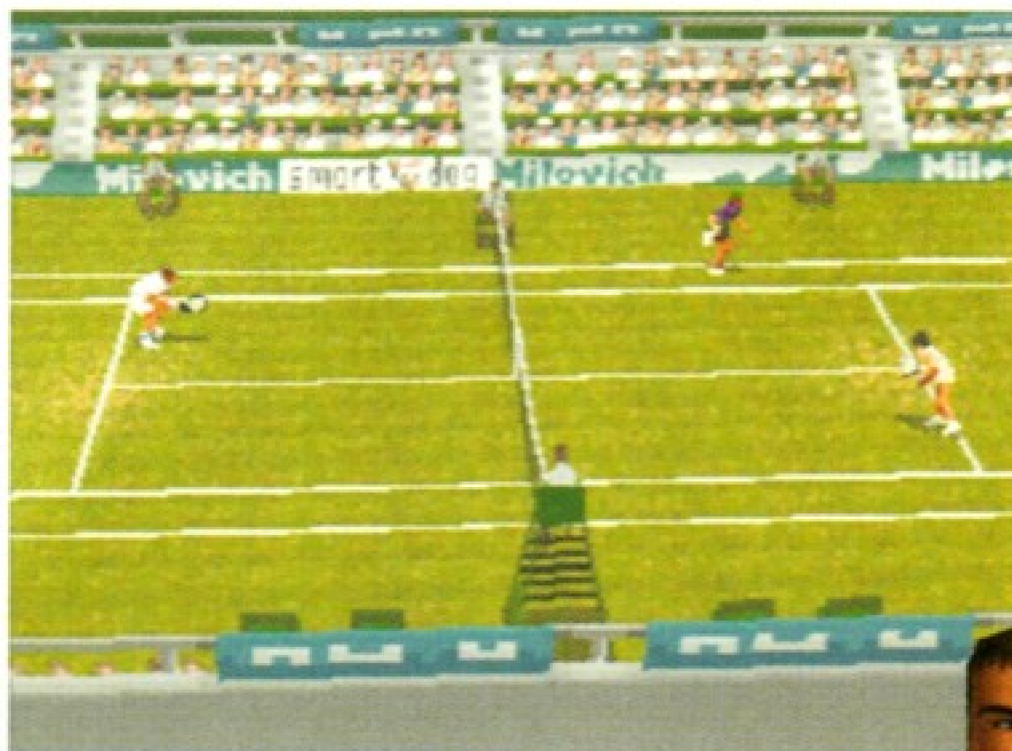
Tetris Plus makes a good stab at being a modern puzzle game, but with the irritating faults mentioned above and far superior competition in the form of Bust-a-Move 2, it's a bit redundant.

graphics	67
sound	63
playability	85
lastability	84
overall	78%

BREAKPOINT

Sports sims of all descriptions are now flooding the Saturn market... except Tennis ones that this. As you can see from this page, Ocean have seen fit to rectify this matter in a major way...

BY	OCEAN
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	GUESS
RELEASE	OUT NOW



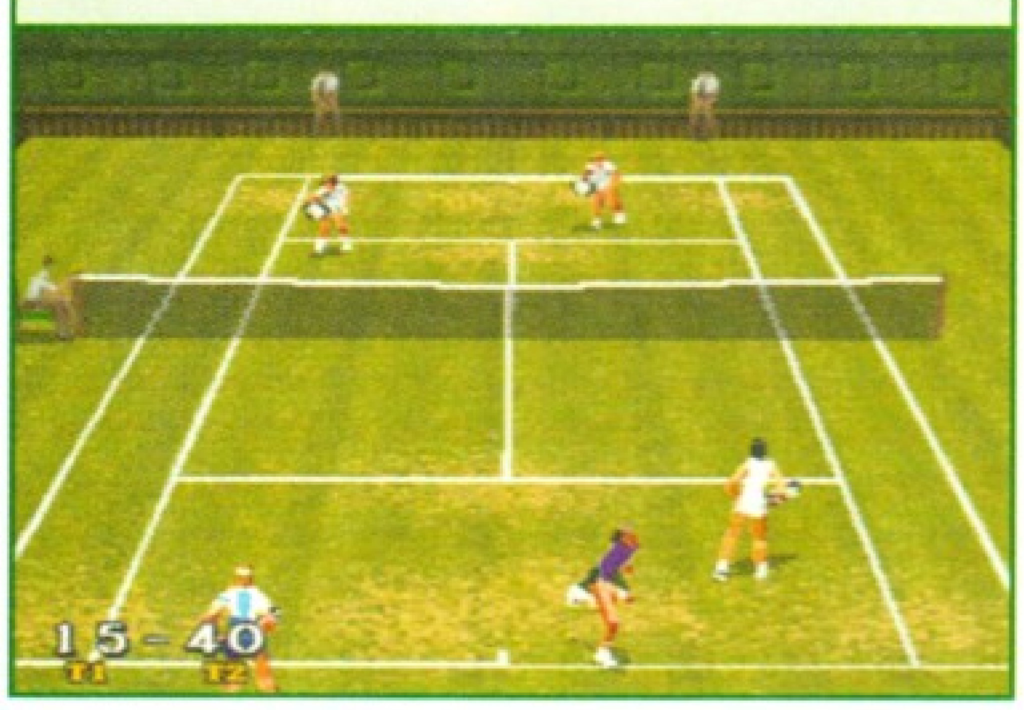
Lovely camera views in the game. And the intro...



... And the motion capture's pretty good too, if a little stiff.

DOUBLE YOUR FUN

Being a pretty proficient Tennis simulation, Breakpoint caters for just about every Tennis eventuality, bar screaming at the Umpire for a bad decision (because unfortunately there aren't any). Top of the list is the inclusion of doubles. Now you might imagine that twice the amount of motion captured players strutting their stuff would slow the game down. Not so. The game engine works extremely well despite nearly doubling the amount of textured polygons. Not bad...



It's about time really, but finally the Saturn has a decent Tennis simulation. Unlike the horrible Acclaim effort Virtual Tennis (which I'm not even sure was released over here in the end), Ocean's Breakpoint is actually a fun, memorable and playable rendition of the sport. It's a shame it wasn't timed to be released with Wimbledon, but hey - who cares if the game's any good. Which Breakpoint is.

The basic deal is that it's one of these simulation type affairs. The whole game is in full 3D with textured polygons being used to create a very realistic Tennis court, and motion capture employed to animate the players. Just about every shot you can imagine has been recorded and included in the game - forehand, backhand, volleys, lobs - you name it (just don't name cross-court volleys though - more on that later). The overall effect is most impressive. Perhaps the movement is a bit on the slow side, but this is just about the only thing to distinguish this from the real thing.



Being a sports simulation, I bet you're just waiting to be deluged by a flurry of options with which to tweak the gameplay. Well Breakpoint is refreshingly sparse in this regard (there's no "change the colour of the umpire's facial hair" frippery) with a decent range of different tournaments, courts, and of course singles and doubles action. Even the range of camera angles is kept to a minimum. Which is a good thing - there's no completely useless US Spy Satellite view, for instance. What you get are views which let you see what's going on.

Criticisms? Well, unfortunately, Breakpoint is a game that's not without its bad points. For starters, the sound is a bit cacky - a disinterested Stephen Hawking soundalike stands in for the umpire, providing really quite poor scores (a real umpire from the Lawn Tennis



As you might have gathered, this is a clay court, which makes for some high bounces.



The action's just a bit too slow to successfully simulate a fast sport like Tennis.

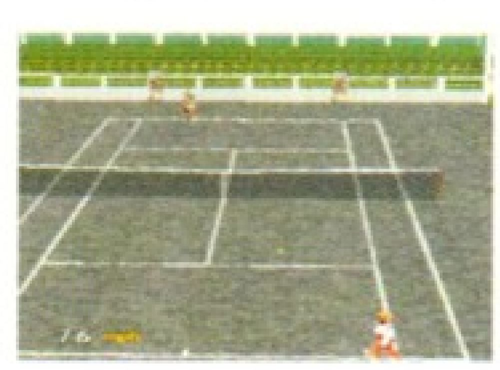


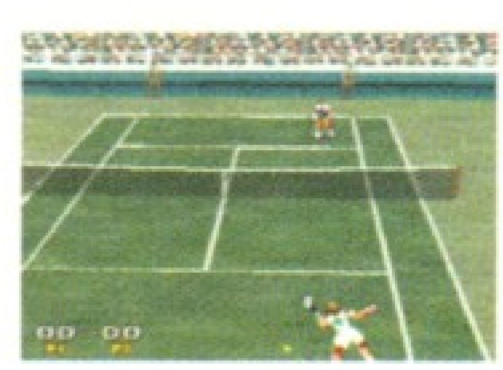
Here's some indoor action. With a ball-boy...

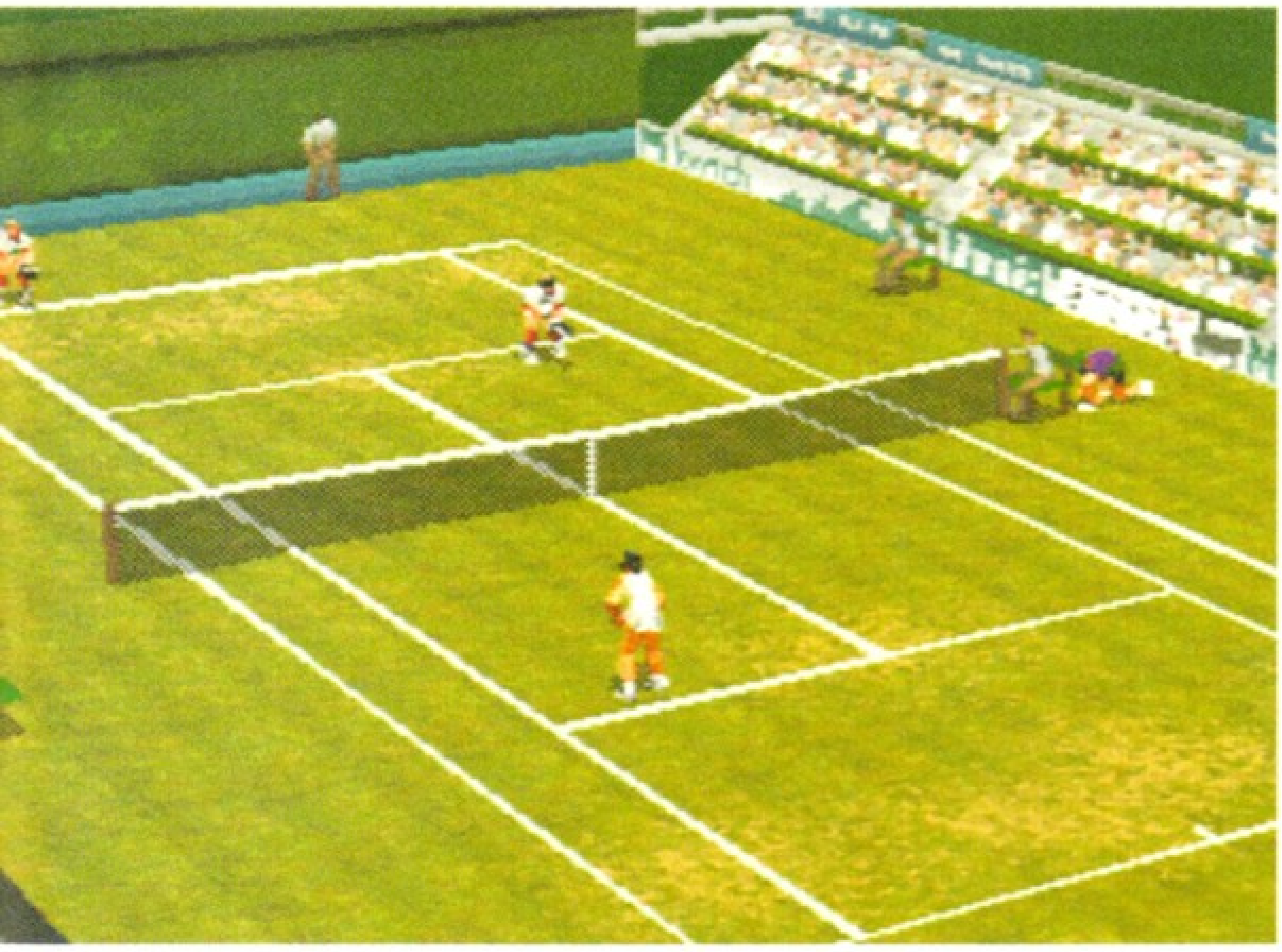


A close-up view of some walking about.









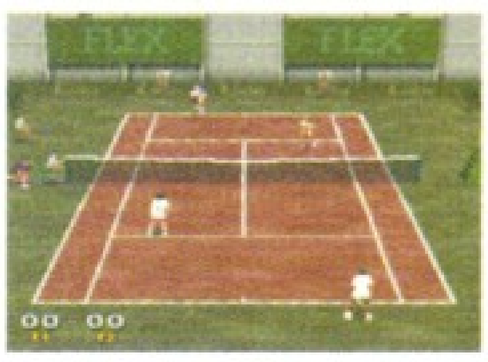


Just like Virtua Fighter 1.

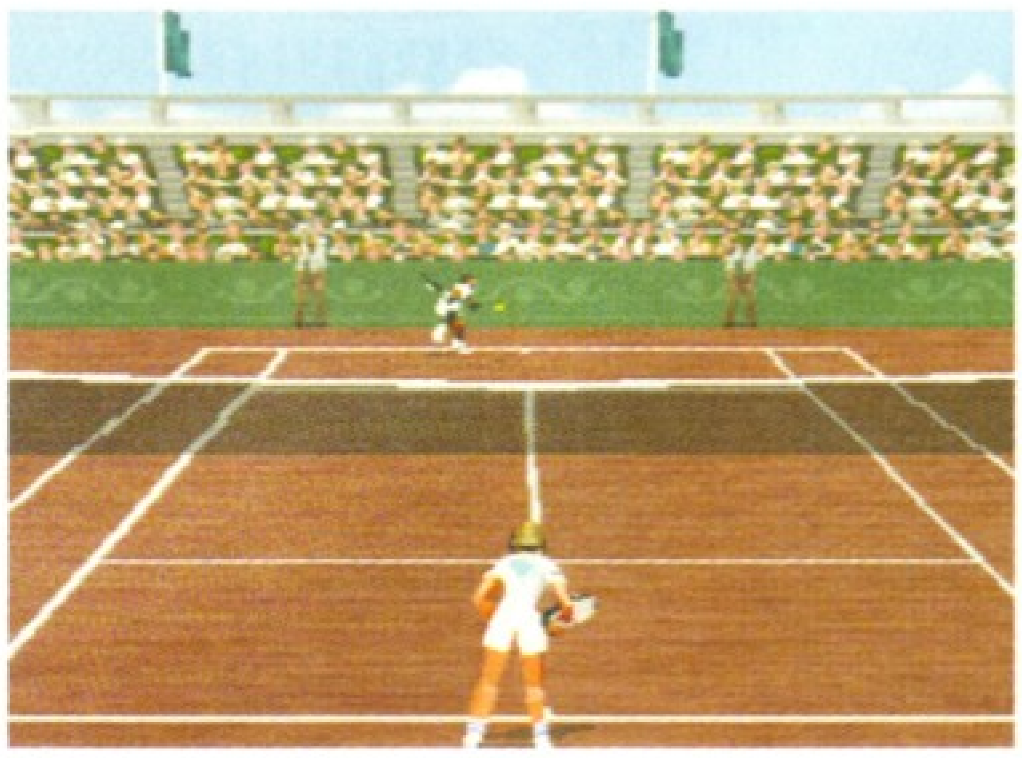

Court Selection screen ahoy!

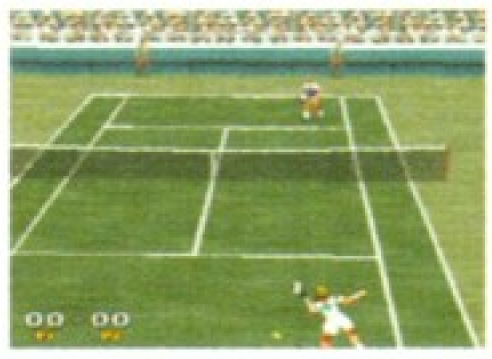

Some tennis tomfoolery.





A bit of doubles fun. Oooh!


This camera angle's quite useful in the one-player game.


Lunging out at the ball.

...The next generation visuals look pretty cool, but playability is a step back from the best of 16-bit.


Frame update is smooth, even with doubles.


The courts are pretty detailed too which is a good thing.



Association would have been great), the crowd are surprisingly muted and some commentary wouldn't have gone amiss (Barry Davies, Jo Durie, Virginia Wade - anybody - would have been good).

Also, from a playability standpoint, Breakpoint suffers in that the motion capture is given precedence over controllability. A real tennis player can start a shot, realise they've made a mistake and adapt. Not so in Breakpoint. This takes a lot of the spontaneity and action out of a sport that thrives on it. It also takes some of the pace out of it - again, an aspect that makes the sport so interesting to watch. I also had trouble with the control method. Yes, just about allthe shots appeared to be present and correct, but directing where your shot's going is just not as intuitive as it should be. That being the case, there's not really any such thing as a cross-court volley - a staple of the actual sport. Wrong-footing your opponent is an exceptionally difficult task, resulting in a series of boring "ping pong" play that ends when one of you forgets to press your button at the right time. However, despite all of these criticisms, Breakpoint does improve dramatically the more you play it. Dogged determination to do well eventually overcomes the lack of instinctual controls and when you reach this point, Breakpoint becomes all right. The thing is, if someone showed me Breakpoint and Super Tennis on the Super NES, I know which one I'd want to play... and unfortunately, it wouldn't be this brand spanking new Saturn title - playability really does rule.

RICH LEADBETTER

COME TO COURTS

A vast array of different courts are on offer for you to play on, each with a different range of interesting background scenery. As you might imagine, the surfaces of each provide different dynamics for the tennis play. For example, a clay court is bound to have better bounce than the Wimbledon-style grassery.







The best tennis game available on Saturn at this time. Not monumentally playable, but Breakpoint does the job pretty well. Better controls and more pace would have made this a classic.

graphics	78
sound	76
playability	77
lastability	78

overall 78%

REVIEW

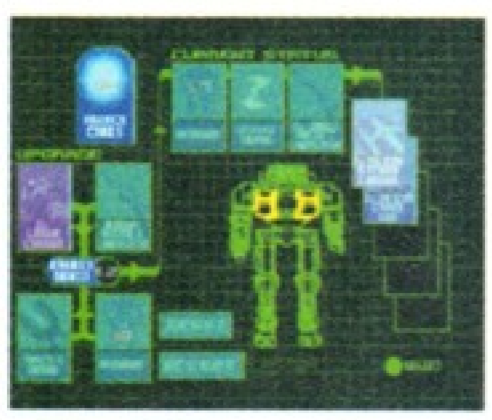
KRAZY IVAN

Big robot plus big gun equals big success, according to Psygnosis. But maybe not, necessarily. Right here is where we find out the truth behind this recently-contrived gaming adage.

BY	PSYGNOSIS
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	DECEMBER

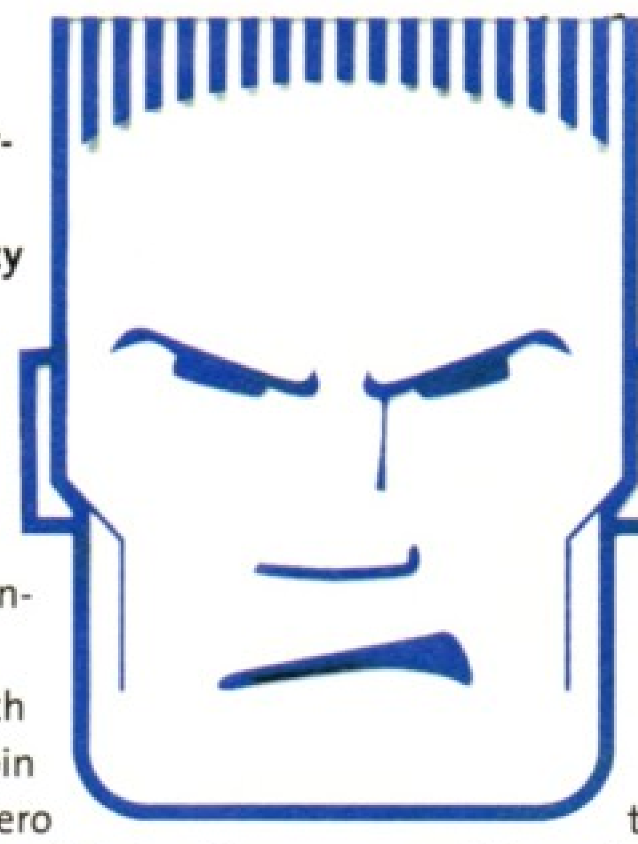


Krazy Ivan tends to specialise in rather large, albeit blocky explosions. As this picture so graphically demonstrates.




Being a Psygnosis product, you get a fairly polished front-end and some cool presentation.

It seems like it was only yesterday when the prospect of a loopy Russian with a 'Launch Missiles Now' button under his thumb would have sent the entire population of the western world running for their nearest municipal bunker with 50-years'-worth of cling peaches, a tin opener and a gross of toilet rolls. In these enlightened times, though, such characters can safely be made figures of fun, as indeed they have been in Krazy Ivan.



Rather than being a genocidal psychotic - who would have been no fun at all, let's face it - the star of this 3-D shoot-zem-up is more of an eye-rolling Rooskie buffoon with a generous spirit and a huge robot death machine, which positively bristles with guns and ammo. From within the cabin of his ten-storey destruct-o-bot our hero is out to even the score in five of the world's trouble spots, where mysterious enemy forces have overcome local defences and kidnapped the citizenry, possibly for some kind of deviant experiments.

Launched into the battle zone, you barely have time to work out the tricksy controls before you're set upon by low-grade rocket trollies and airborne gunships that attack in pairs. These are small fry, though, a mere shin-grazing annoyance that quickly yield to your twin cannons, spilling out hostages, weapon and shield recharges and power-ups for you to collect.

Ivan's rocket launcher and self-targeting laser are even more devastating but ammunition is in short supply, so these luxury weapons are best kept in reserve to deal with the real mission targets.

The map at the bottom of the screen indicates where these objectives are to be found. After a short robo-march across the hilly landscape you come across mighty mecha-bosses, modelled after some Earth creature such as a spider, gorilla or jellyfish. Or robot. Stomping into their patrol area wakes them up and they immediately attack with their own special brand of rockets and death rays. These behemoths shouldn't cause too many problems in the early stages, though, because the simple tactic of repeatedly side-stepping, turning and firing seems to flummox their low-grade battle computers and you can often fool them into shooting at where you were rather than

Does this PlayStation port-over make up for the extremely poor Destruction Derby?







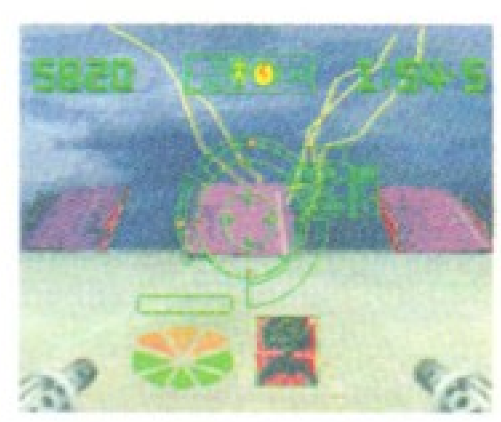
Things get a bit more colourful later on in the game, as you can see.



Using the strafe left/right buttons really dents this game's challenge – a fault of the original...



... Which unfortunately wasn't correct for the Saturn version.





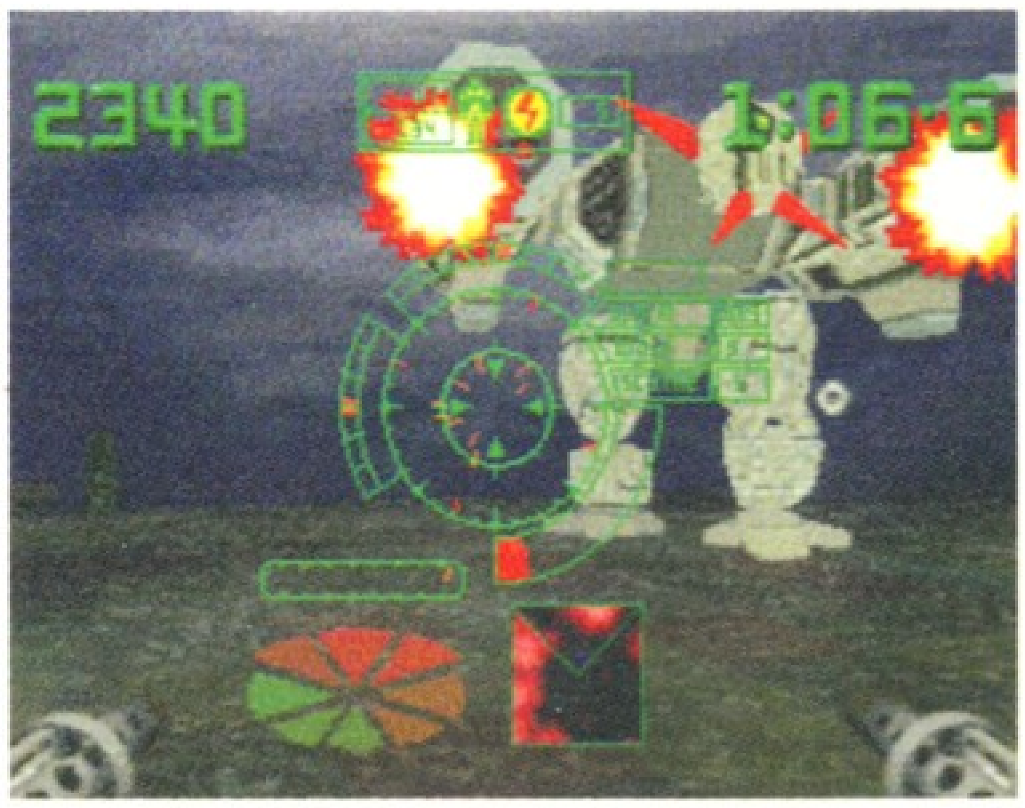

A robot gets it in the face.

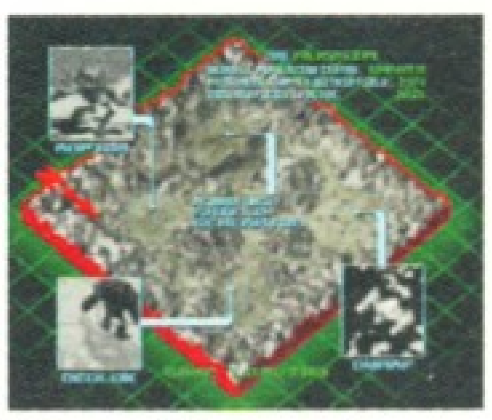


Lock-on! Fire! Die robot scum!

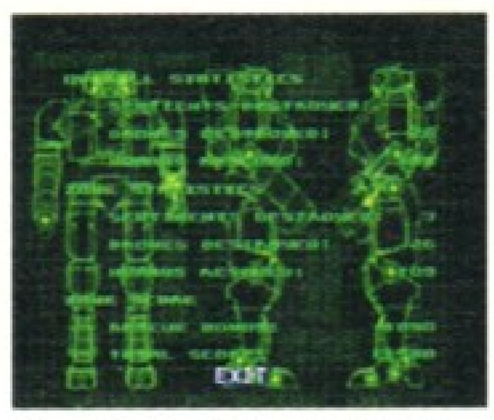


One of Krazy Ivan's more impressive metallic meanies.





This would be a map then.



Some kind of blueprint thing.

It's got the graphics and the speed to match the PlayStation original - but does Krazy Ivan match the excellent Gun Griffon?

where you are. As of level three, though, you need to come up with something more cunning as the bad guys tend to do nasty things like dive underground and spring up elsewhere, and they're often accompanied by some of their mini-drone mates that take distracting pot-shots at you.



Once you've pasted these charlies the primary mission objective is revealed, a central installation surrounded by a spinning shield. To finish the level you have to dodge all sorts of rocketry for long enough to blast through the shield and destroy the glowing orb within. The same dodge-and-fire tactics work here as elsewhere and, for the most part, these final confrontations aren't terribly challenging providing you can be bothered to go through the motions of repeatedly side-stepping, turning and firing.

Extensive research reveals that this slight gameplay flaw dogged the Playstation edition of Krazy Ivan, released by Psygnosis last year. I didn't find it to be too much of a problem with the Saturn game, though if you do use this technique it does reduce the early part of the game to a series of samey confrontations. By the time you get on to the later levels, though, the odds do start to get overwhelming and there's too much weapon-swapping, weapon-aiming and mad evasive manoeuvring to let you get away with such foppish play.

The visual experience of playing Krazy Ivan isn't bad, though there isn't a lot of variety between stages - expect mesas and valleys in varying earth tones and five shades of Sullen for the sky. Hills tend to pop into view shortly after whatever is standing on them, so you occasionally get floating robots appearing on the horizon, but the animation on the robots themselves is pretty good.

For all its fancy graphics and add-on weapons, though, Krazy Ivan isn't much more than a souped-up version of that arcade oldie, Battlezone. There's a little bit more to the gameplay but not enough to lift it above being a fairly simplistic blast. If the visuals had been a bit more exciting or there had been more variety in the scenarios, the programmers could probably have covered up this flaw and it wouldn't have been such an issue. But what was very nearly a full-on, robo-death-blast with napalm, blood and snot comes across as being frenzied but not terrific fun. If you're anything like me, after two-and-a-half levels you'll be (a) slightly fed up with it and (b) realising you've still got half the game to go through before you can comfortably allow yourself to buy something else.

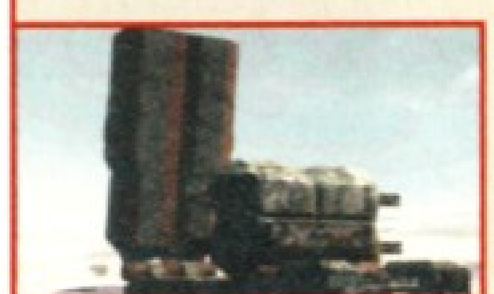
PAUL GLANCEY

THE KRAZY GANG

Notable among Krazy Ivan's delights is its krazy intro sequence in which we are introduced to Ivan and his krazy ground krew as they are driving their robot-launching truck through the Siberian tundra. Ivan, who has been stuck in his robo-cockpit for seven freakin' hours, lives up to his name and suddenly decides he's had enough sitting around and unexpectedly initiates the launch sequence. His little helpers just manage to get the launcher into position before he blows them all to kinkdom cohm, then off he streaks, almost smashing the wings off two patrolling MiG 29s before he lands with a thud and stomps off to kick some 'buttski'. Thrilling!













Fast and furious (eventually), but gameplay that is slightly too simplistic prevents this from being the definitive robo-blast you might have hoped for.

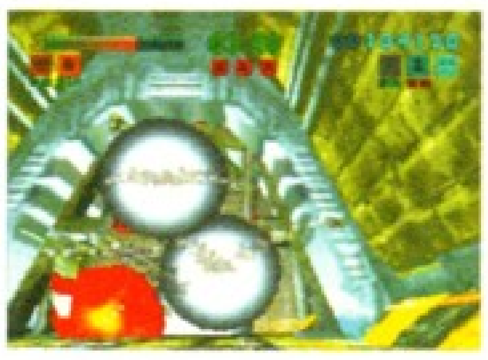
graphics	79
sound	70
playability	74
lastability	73

overall **75%**

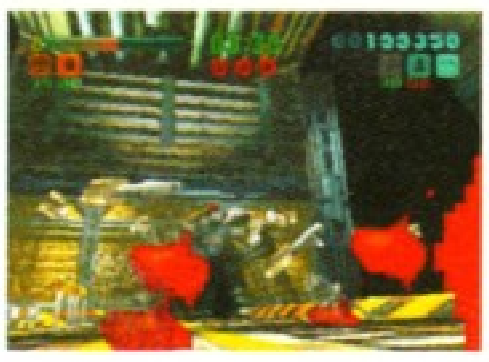
TUNNEL B1

So... Descent meets Doom meets WipeOut eh? That's what we'd been told to expect with the now legendary Tunnel B1. Well it isn't that, but it's still not bad...

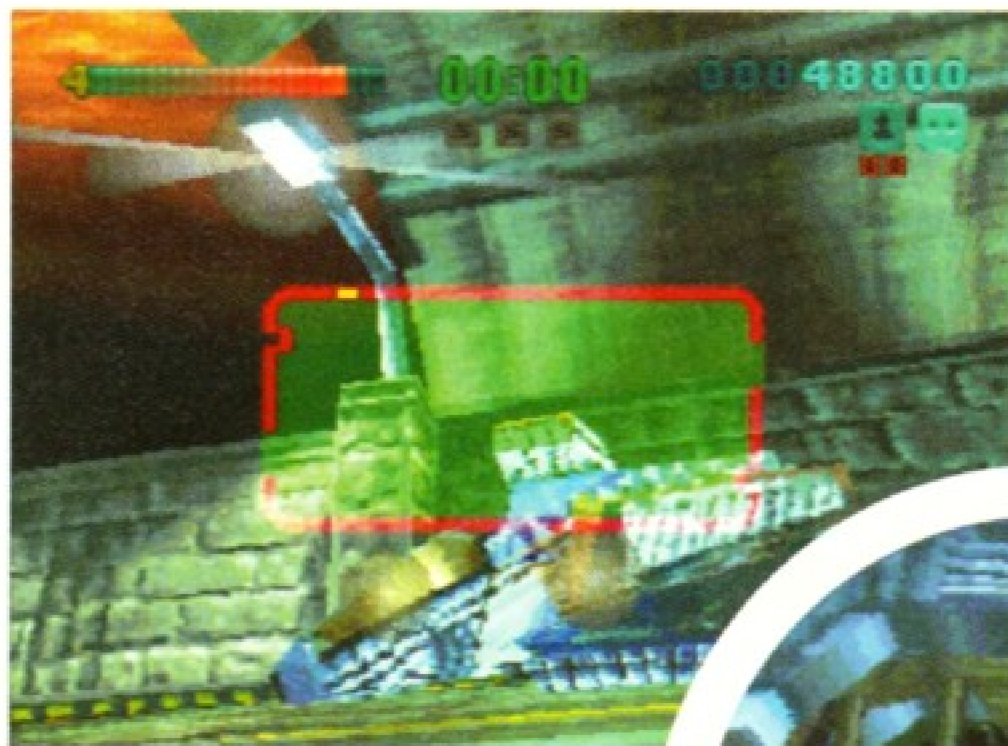
BY	OCEAN
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	DECEMBER



Let the blast door have it and collect all the power-ups!



Things explode into their component parts. Nice.



Strafing alongside your first target on level one. Looks great eh?





Some of the explosions are naff - others, like this, look pretty damn ace.

Tunnel B1 on the PlayStation. Many were the arguments I've witnessed about this particular product. Some people loved it, others thought it extremely dull. And yet as far I saw, despite the controversy (and some very negative second comments) it only managed one duff score in the whole games magazine industry.

Well, I'm not going to indulge in any Tunnel baiting today, because I was actually quite impressed with this new Ocean game. The big question on everyone's mind is: how does it compare to the PlayStation version? The original Sony version used just about every technical trick in the PlayStation's repertoire and it's well known that the Saturn does find it difficult to cope with the transparencies and suchlike that were used with gay abandon in the first version.

Well, the good news is that the Saturn version still looks pretty cool. The detail is pretty much on a par with the PlayStation version but more importantly the speed and fluidity are nigh-on identical. The lighting has been toned down slightly, but it's still mightily impressive. Unfortunately, the transparencies are replaced with the usual pixel meshwork, but it's still pretty cool. What aren't so great are the explosions. Again, no transparencies so it's a jaunt to Orange Puff Central.

The graphics are the main pulling point, because in actual fact the gameplay is very pedestrian. Skim along the tunnels blowing things up and dodge enemy fire. Locate various power-ups and objects and find the exit (sometimes to a time limit). It would be better if all of this was a bit more exciting. The enemies seem to move in slow motion (and your firing rate is also slow, so that makes things even) and response to your controls is also a tad on the slack side. The lack of variety continues on to later levels although the timed levels are nice and there is some decent variation in the backgrounds. Enemies are great too: when you first get a good look at the enemy helicopter gunships you're going to be impressed - even more so when you shoot one down and watch it spiral towards the ground, where it explodes again.

It's this that makes you keep playing the game.

SPECIAL EFFECTS WIZARD

If Tunnel B1 is going to win any awards, it's going to be for its graphics, which - and let's face facts - are very lovely indeed. So what kind of visual effects can you look forward to eh? Well, look at these pictures.





Surrounding the tunnel there are tons of lights - lamp posts and suchlike - each of which is a lightsource, with beams of light issuing forth. As you turn, the shards of light change direction accordingly.





What isn't so great are the explosions. Ginormous great pixillated multicoloured puffs materialise with every conflagration. Compared with the other visuals, the explosions are pretty poor.





The basic ambient lighting throughout the stages is most impressive. If there's an explosion around the corner for example, the entire walls like up with the blast. It's stuff like this that impresses the most.

Hats off to Neon for a very close conversion - graphically, Tunnel B1 is bordering on the superb.



Shoot that laser cannon!



Blast the futuristic dust cart!



Incoming orange puff!



Kill ALL futuristic C5s!



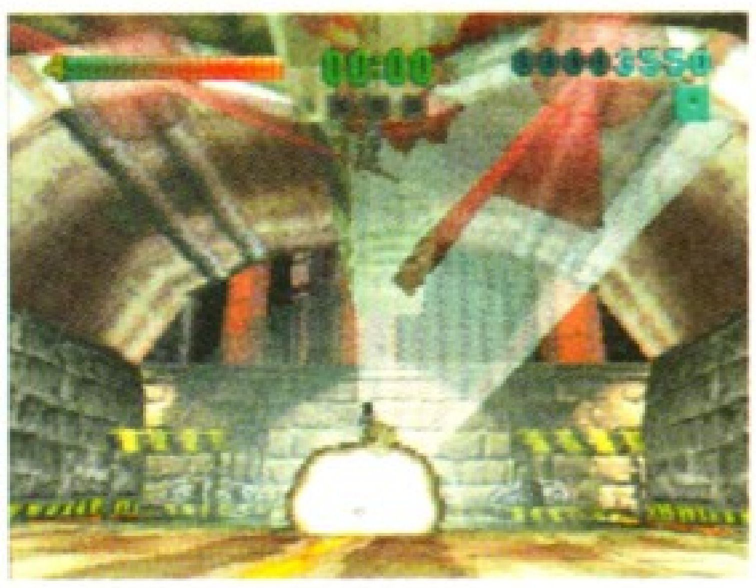
Blasting the boxes reveals some health power-ups. Get 'em quickly before they turn radioactive and toast you.







Some of the music sounds rather like the soundtrack from "The Spy Who Loved Me"!



Reaping the rewards of a weapons power-up.



This gigantic generator is one of your targets on level five. Shutting it down is a priority!



Oooh... that's gotta hurt.





It's clear that coders Neon are doing things with the hardware that is well ahead of other games in the genre and you're dying to see what comes next. Compare the (currently) slow, jerky morose-looking Doom on Saturn to this and Neon's technical mastery becomes obvious.

But the bottom line is, you can't help but think that far, far more could have been done with a game engine of this calibre. Of course, this is being promised for the forthcoming Viper (also from Neon and using the same technology), but there's no reason why Neon couldn't have just ripped off Descent, which would have been much more preferable to what this offers.

But judging this game on its own merits, I have to admit that I enjoyed B1 far more than I thought I would based on previous experience with the early PlayStation version. It's extremely challenging (and frustrating at times) but still pretty rewarding. Plus there is an extra level and enemies exclusive to the Saturn version, which is a great bonus that goes some-way to making up for the visual compromises.

RICH LEADBETTER



Incoming gunship. Cool!



The timed levels are cool.

CONTROL-A-THON

Tunnel B1 has a huge array of buttons and suchlike to master and it does take a while to get to grips with the control method. The default controls really have to be changed. The game starts with forward as button A and backwards as down on the joypad! We recommend swapping around the accelerate and weapons lock-on buttons and the game becomes much, much more playable as a result. It's just really odd that the controls are like that in the first place.



A pretty linear game tarted up with some spectacular graphics. Not the classic it should have been, but pretty solid (if a tad samey) entertainment.

graphics	90
sound	90
playability	85
lastability	88

overall **87%**

REVIEW

MADDEN '97

Finally, the Megadrive grid-iron guru makes an appearance on the Saturn. Oh, John Madden, you cuddly giant of American Football, where have you been all our lives? Was it the cake shop, perhaps?

BY	EA SPORTS
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	SPORTS
RELEASE	DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 92%



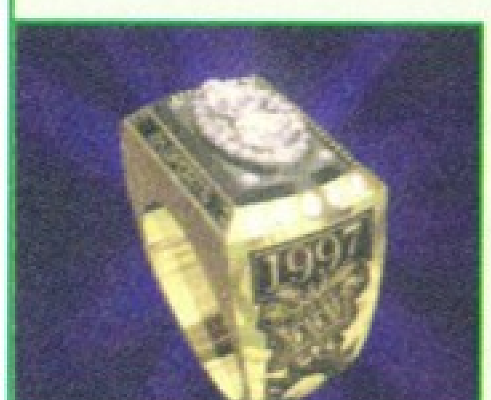


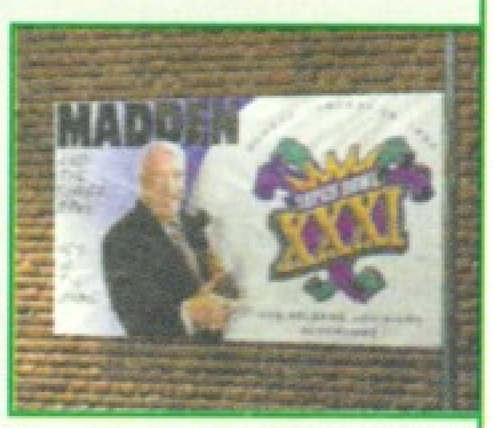


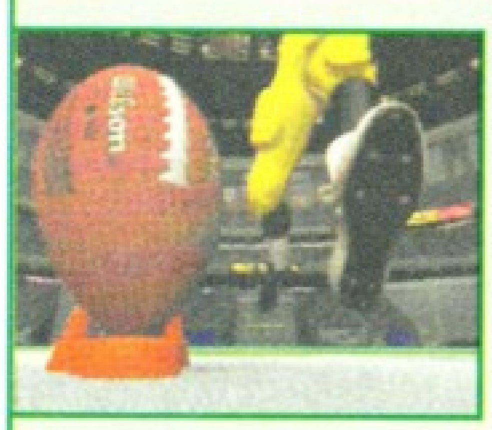
Unlike some other sports games that have a zillion different fancy camera angles, most of them useless, Madden '97's varying visual modes are all completely usable and add to that 'just-like-being-there' feeling. In the shot above we see the diagonal view, while on the right are the 'Classic Madden' views.

Heeeere's Johnny!

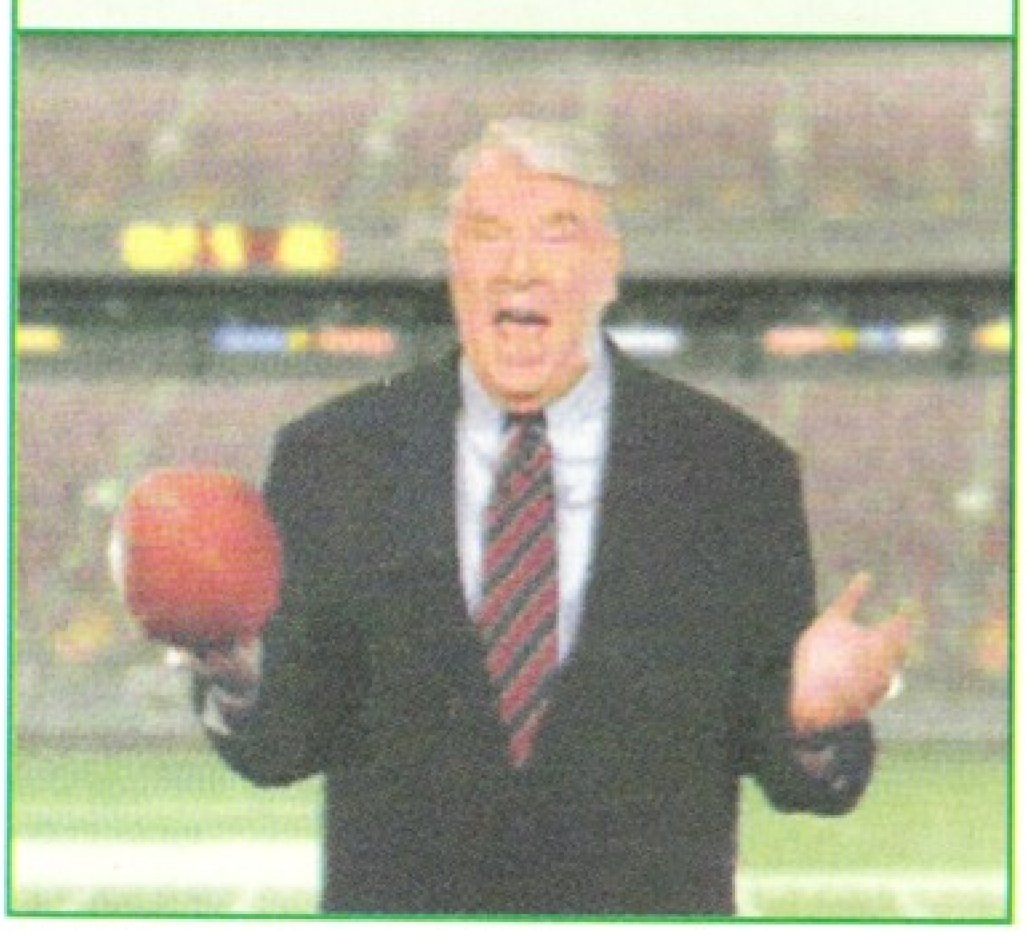
John Madden's larger-than-human-life personality comes across superbly in the block-busting rendered intro to Madden '97. It starts off with a shot of his bejewelled ring - a Superbowl ring, no less - which spins and sparkles, then fades into a Superbowl XXXI logo on a billboard poster. The camera pulls back and heads off down a city street before flying in through the roof of a nearby sports stadium to catch the kick-off of a football game. The hardcore gridiron action is intercut with the Madden logo, then the big guy himself appears, juggling a football that bursts into flames and flies out of the screen at you! Heads up, sports fans!









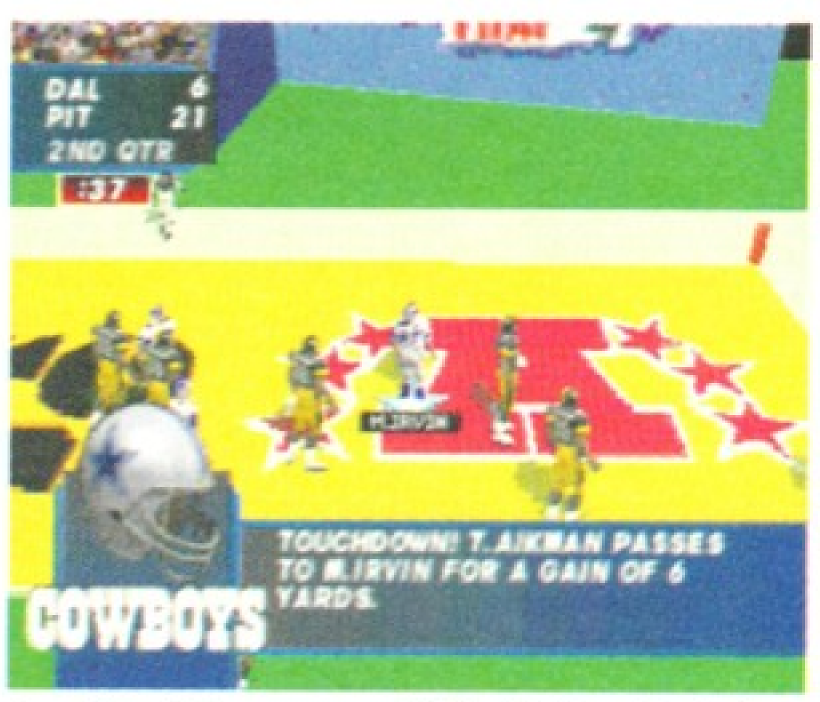


If there's one heavy-set fellow who knows his American Football, you can bet your goddamned Limey ass it's John Madden. A living legend to Megadrive owners, his games converted many a Tommy English soccer lover into a Yankee Doodle Dandy gridiron guy, with their cool three-dimensional graphics and vast range of plays. For some reason, Saturn owners have been denied the Madden Experience and have had to make do with Acclaim's slightly iffy Quarterback Club... but not any more!

EA Sports has finally got around to knocking up a Saturn version of JM's latest incarnation, which features all the frills and enhancements, the swooping camera angles and the vast arrays of options, that have become the hallmark of EASN's recent PlayStation and PC titles, as well as the full breadth of gameplay that made the original Megadrive games such classics. Well, the first two at least.

But perhaps you aren't familiar with the basic rules of this strange imported sport, hmm? Perhaps you don't realise that the object of the game is to collect the ball and place it in your opponent's 'End Zone' at the far end of the field. It is entirely possible that you are not aware that you get four attempts, or 'downs', within which you must move the ball ten yards closer to your opponent's end of the field by use of running or passing plays. And there would be no shame in admitting your ignorance of the fact that failure to make that ten-yard gain within the allotted downs results in 'a turnover', when the other team gains possession. The chances are, though, that if you've read this far in a review of an American Football game, you know this stuff already. So I won't tell you.

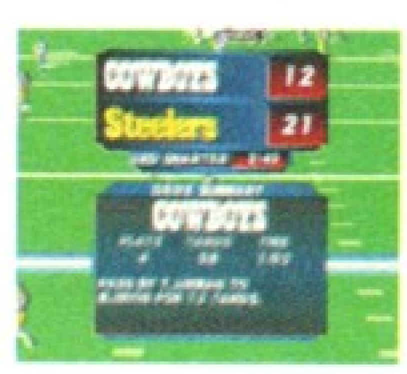
These are the merest basics of American Football, though. Over the decades, playing it has been refined into a science, with a level of strategic subtlety beyond that of any other sport. EA Sports have pulled out all the stops to ensure that Madden '97 does not skimp

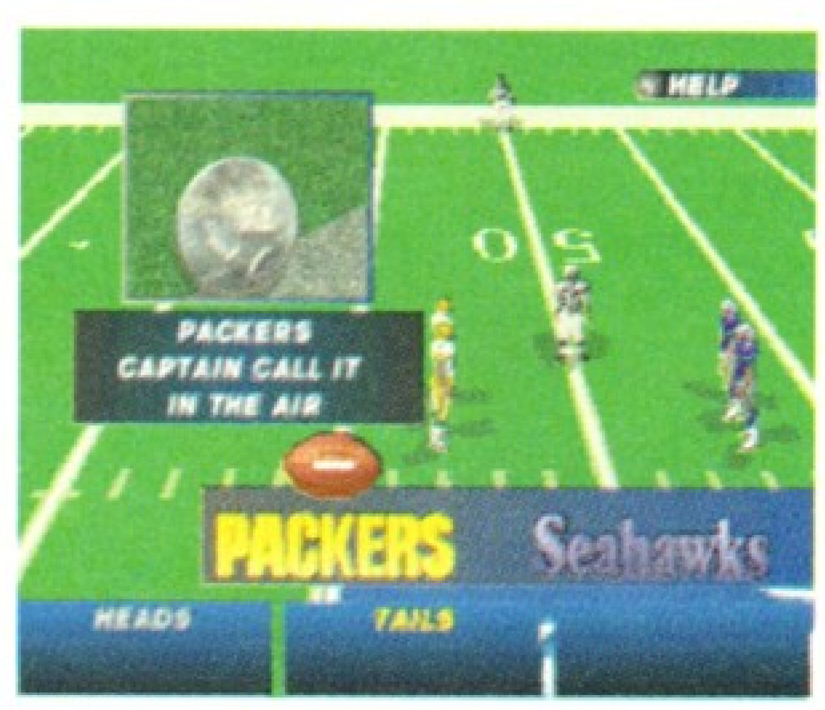


Touchdown! I'm so greaaat! Oh. Wait a minute. I appear to be in the throes of a trouncing. Damn.



Over 100 teams! Coo!



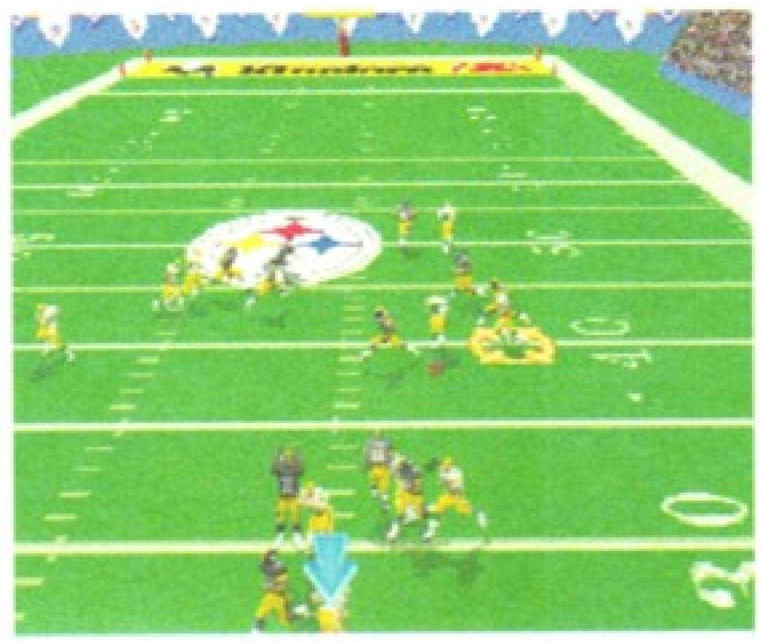


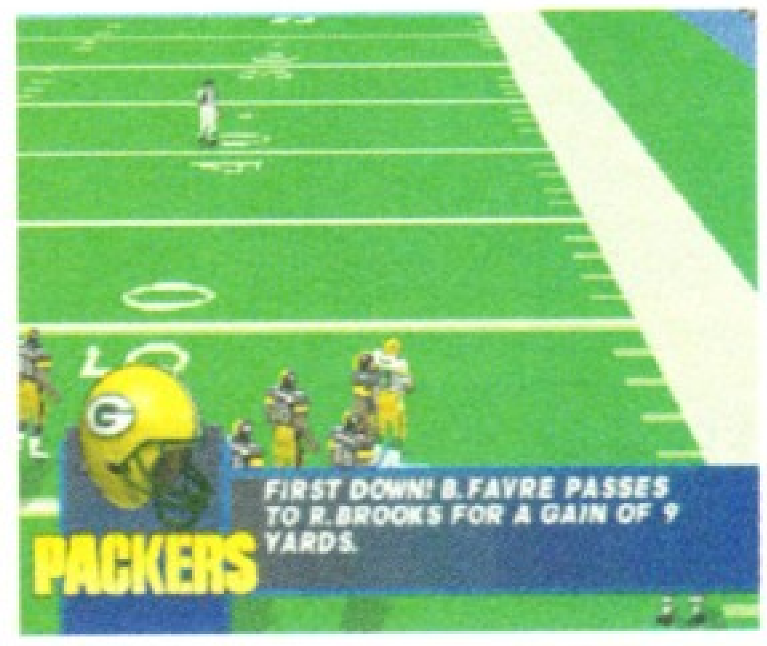
Look at that. I can't even win the flinkin' toss. What hope do I have for victory in the Superbowl?



Watch and learn, true believers, as I demonstrate the perfect offensive play.


There's the snap! Now the quarterback just has to quickly pass it to 'Player C'.


He receives the ball and can now leg it up the field, covering yard after yard.



Of course, this tactic is strictly the reserve of scum-sucking cheatbags. Not true Maddenites.

The only way to really play Madden is against other people, and in that respect Madden '97 seems flawless.

on these subtleties in any way, and that it recreates the full grid-iron experience.

For a start-off, the game features over 100 NFL teams of the past and present, as well as some secret teams, featuring real-life players in their real-life positions with their real-life abilities, and even their real-life faces appearing on the screen. You can pit them against each other in a full NFL season's-worth of games, in play-offs, a Superbowl or a Pro Bowl tournament, playing in digitally modelled versions of all 30 NFL stadiums. And the whole thing looks extra-realistic because all of the player sprites are built from pixels motion-captured from actual players, and you can watch the action from any one of eight 3D viewpoints. Plus, there's in-game commentary and post-quarter analysis from Madden himself, along with the sort of statistical overload that American Football is famous for (but is met by supreme indifference by us lot).

Aside from the obsessive attention to detail, though, the great thing about the Madden Megadrive games was the perfect blend of play-calling strategy and nimble-fingered arcade action. This too has been perfected and carried across to the Saturn game. At each down, you can instruct your players to re-enact one of 500 different defensive and offensive plays designed by the Big M himself.

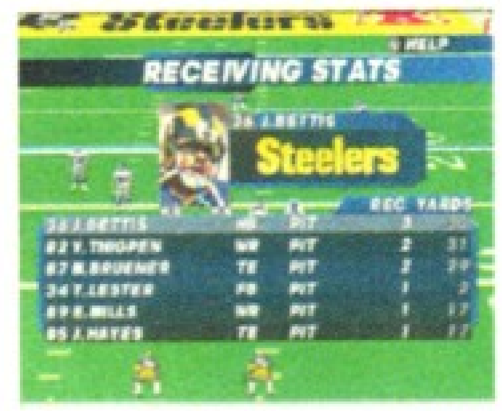
Once you've set them in motion you get incredible control over your players. Try a passing play and you'll find the quarterback can now send the ball out to any of five team-mates. All this sets Madden '97 up to be the most complete American Football game yet, but there is a fly in the linament. When you're on the offense against a computer team you can beat them every time with one play, the Double Flag. A bit disappointing, that, as it can provide an easy way out if you find yourself in dire score straits with the timer ticking down.

Having said that, the only way to really play Madden is, and always has been, against other people, and in that respect Madden '97 seems flawless.

PAUL GLANCEY

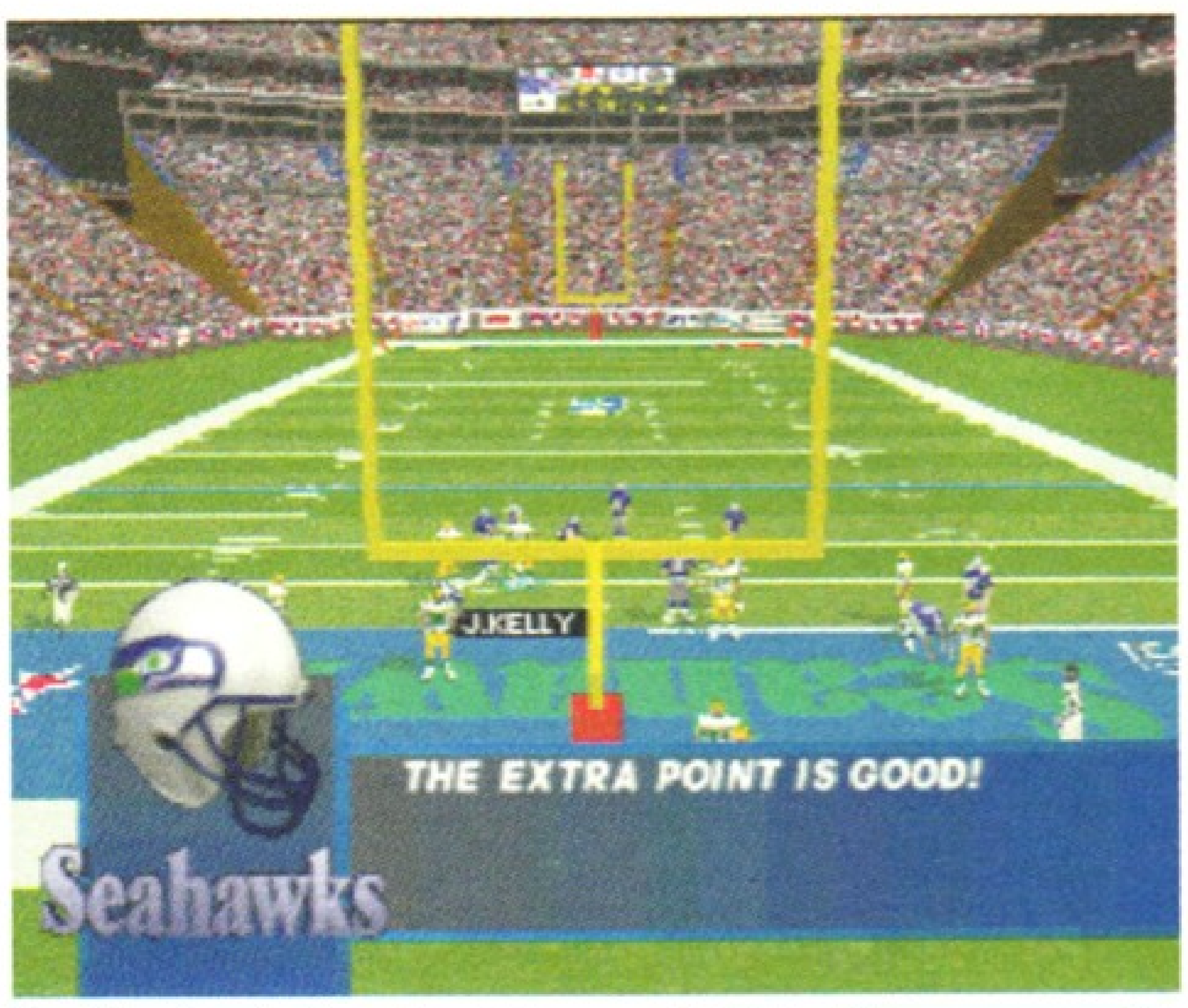


So many controls!!?? Gooh!

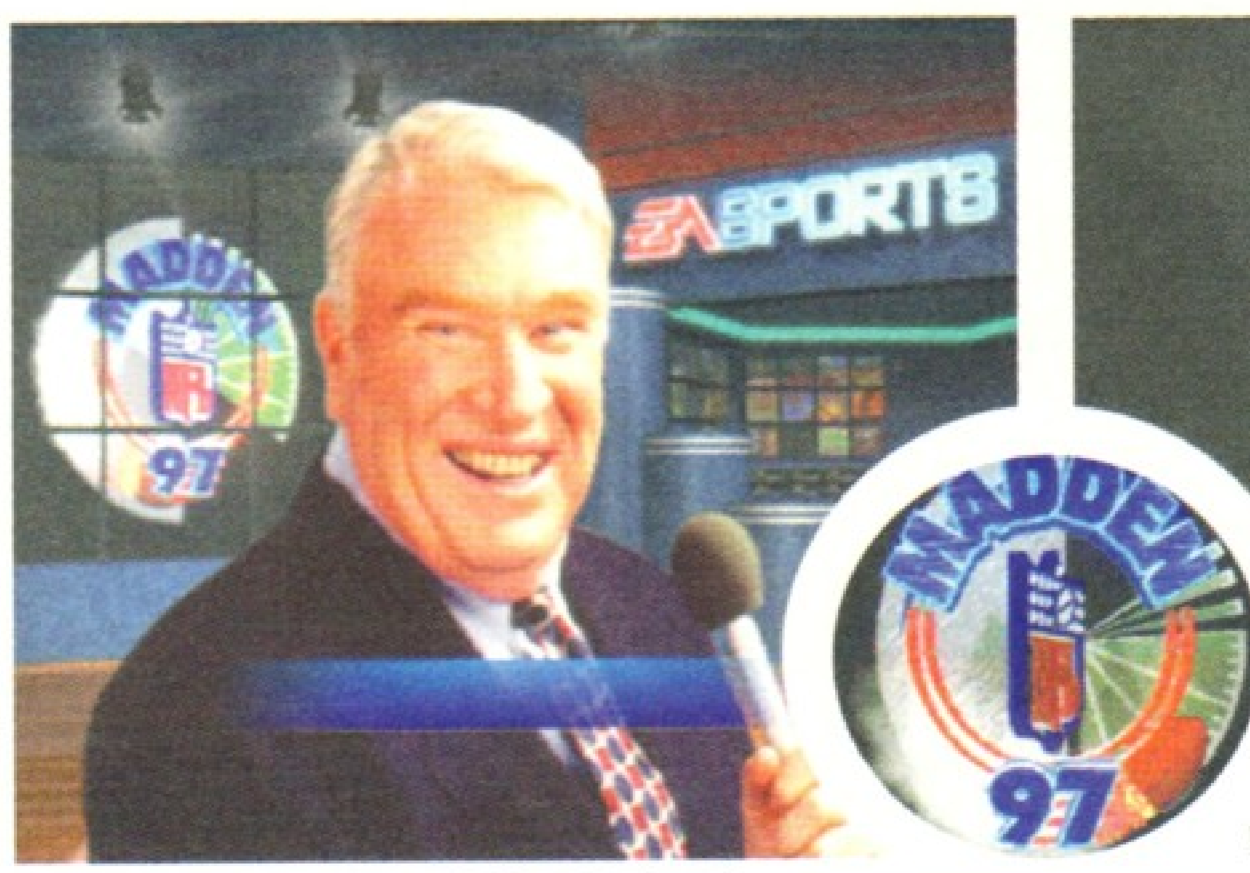


Those receiving stats in full.

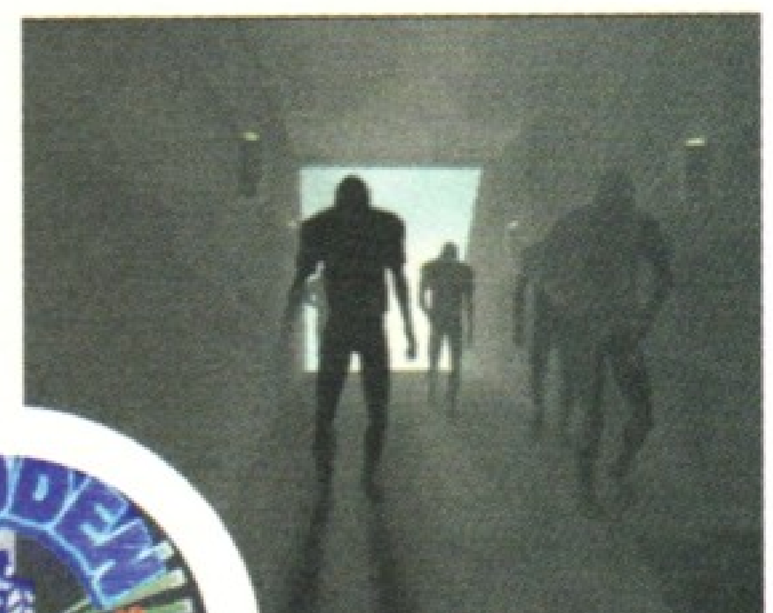

The pre-game fly-by shows off the vastness of the stadium.



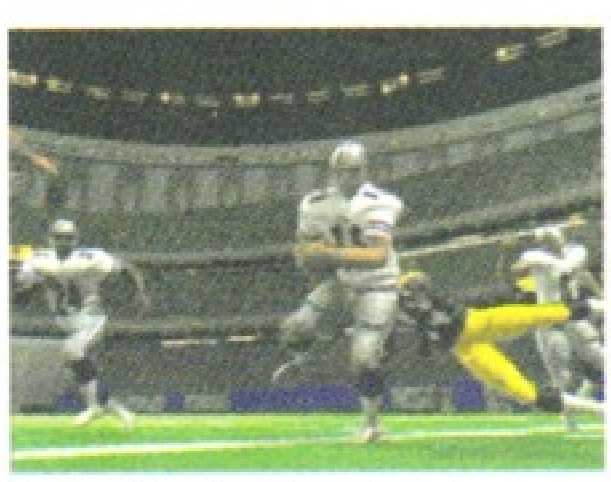
Hey, ANY extra point is good, but this one was EXTRA good. Yum-yummy-yumkin!

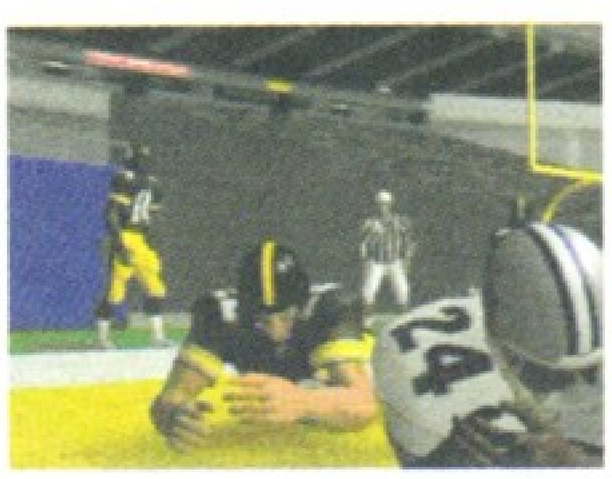


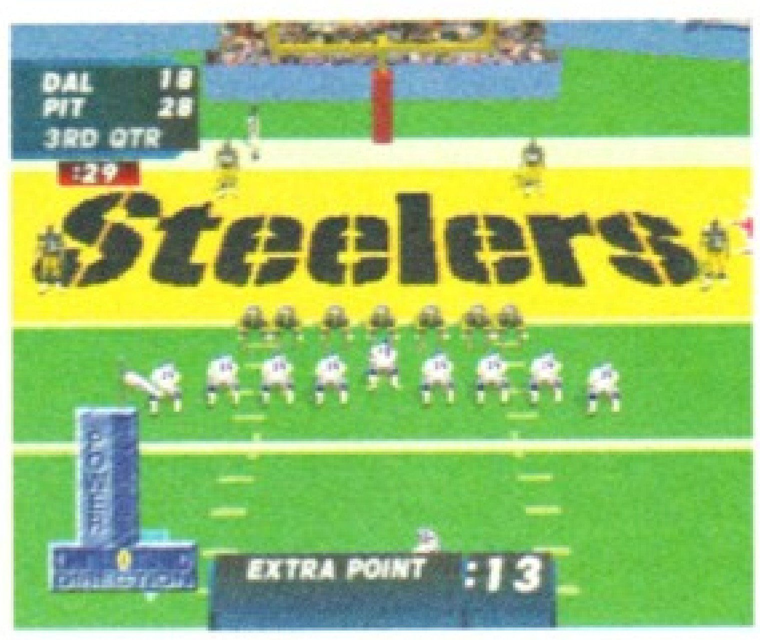
What a cheery face! Stick a fluffy white beard on him and you'd have Santa!


Defeated, the players are banished to a world devoid of colour, where they exist only as beings of light and dark.

"It's gooood!" All we can do is gaze slack-jawed at Madden '97 and wonder if gridiron games can get any better than this.


More action from the intro, here.


If only he'd learned to tie shoelaces.



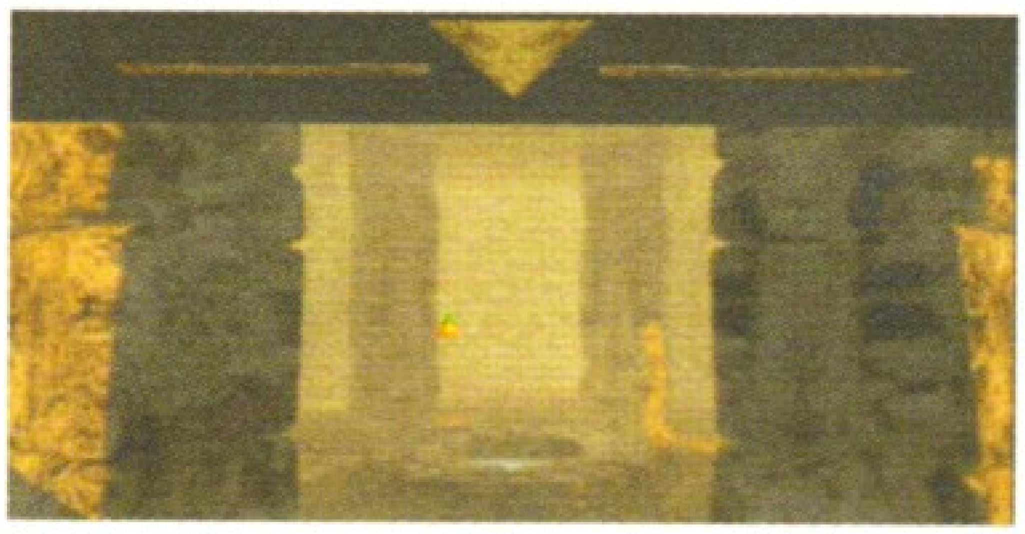
Only total spong-buffoons blow the extra point!

graphics	89
sound	86
playability	93
lastability	92
overall	92%

JEWELS OF THE ORACLE

Who is the Oracle? And what's the big deal with his jewels? It's a baffling mystery that only you – YES, YOU! – can solve! No, there's no getting out of it, so just sit down, shut up and get on with it.

BY	SUNSOFT
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	PUZZLE
RELEASE	DECEMBER



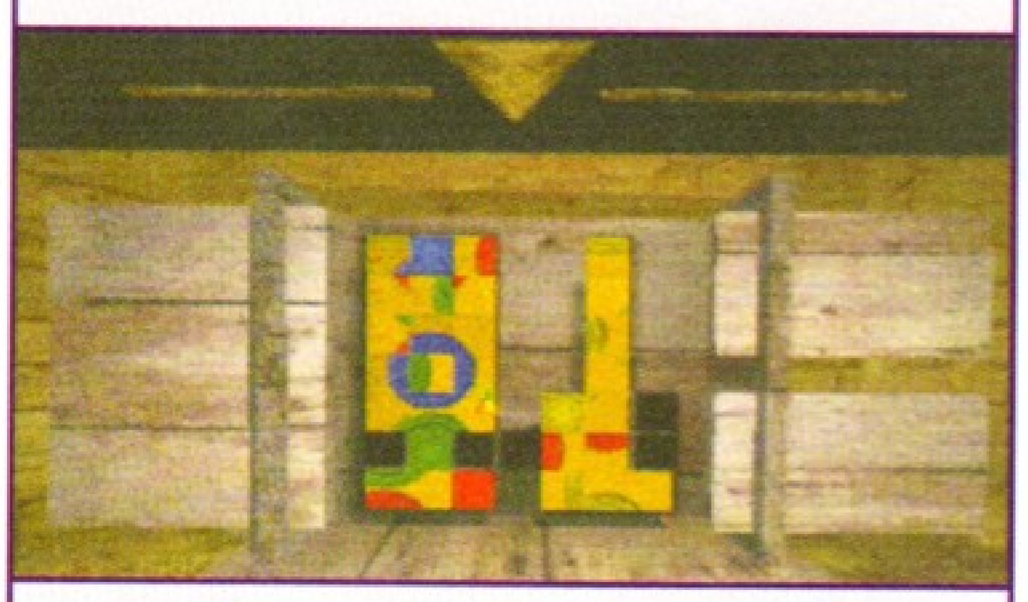


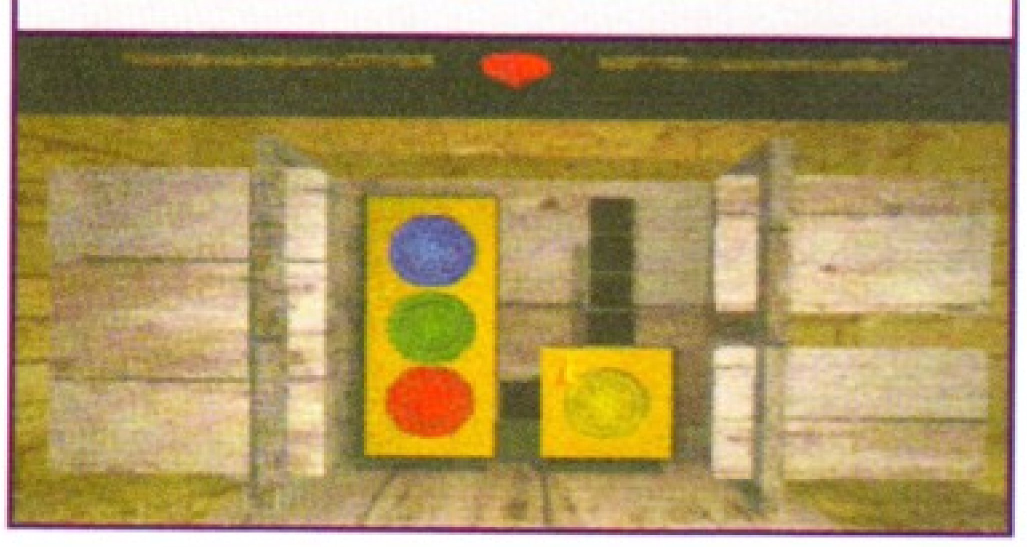
The green-tipped arrow points the way through the Nisus vestibule, towards the mystical pool that serves as the central hub of your quest. Press one of the stones around the pool to open the route to those fateful brain-teasers that hide untold riches.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS OF THE ANCIENTS

Here's one of the few conundrums in Jewels of the Oracle that is actually soluble by members of the genus *homo sapiens*, as opposed to the super-evolutionary beings who appear on *15 To 1*. The clue – "Be as persistent as the tiny creatures beneath your feet" – clearly gives it away as a sliding block puzzle, in which you must rearrange jumbled tiles which bear the images of four coloured circles. Though the number of tiles and the shape of the frame makes it look complicated, it's actually easier than most other such puzzles, simply because there are five empty spaces which give you plenty of room to manoeuvre.







Fed up with your current country of residence? Perhaps you don't care for the weather? Or the lack of quality television programmes? Or the fact that you can't find a decent 24-hour upholsterer due to a ridiculous and outdated law made in the late 1600s?

Perhaps, then, you might have found happiness in the land of Nisus, an ancient realm in the Middle East, where everything was nice. The problem with nice places, though, is that everyone ends up wanting to go there. They end up getting overcrowded, the drains get clogged up and the whole place turns into a disgusting pit of human ordure.

In their wisdom, the rulers of Nisus foresaw this eventuality, and to save their land from repellent funks they set up a rigorous vetting procedure for new citizens. To enter Nisus, prospective immigrants would have to complete 24 mindbending puzzles, the like of which would never be found anywhere else on this planet, not even in the most expensive of Christmas crackers. Thus did only the most enlightened humans gain admittance to Nisus, and for many years the land thrived as the ancient world's number one summer resort for tedious brainiacs.

The citizens of Nisus would no doubt have gone on to found a shining world empire founded on peace, intellect and smugness, but fate took a different course. A devastating earthquake buried their land, leaving no trace of them or their civilisation... until now. Archaeologists have unexpectedly unearthed the Girsu Gates which stood at the entrance to Nisus. The incredible treasures of a lost world beckon, but the gates steadfastly refuse to open until someone completes those selfsame 24 puzzles. As everyone else seems to have succumb to some ancient curse that forces them to spend half the day squatting over a hole in the sand clutching a toilet roll, you figure, what the hell, I'll have a go. So you do. And so it begins.

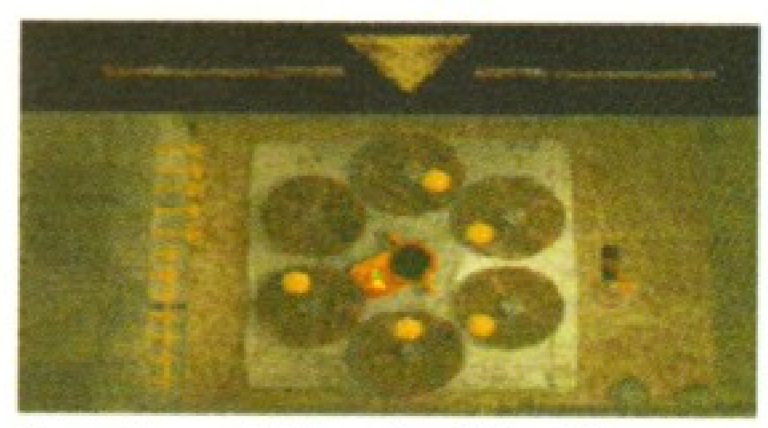
Press START on your controller and you enter a pre-rendered world depicted in letter-box full-motion video and controlled by a small brass-effect cursor. The tip of the cursor glows green when it passes over an object or possible exit, and when you make a selection, a short animation takes you to the next part of the game.

Once the quest has begun you find yourself inside the buried gateway to Nisus and your only

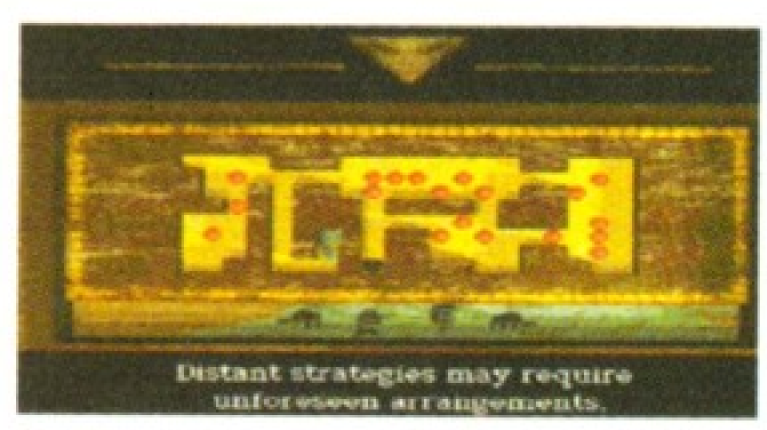
To enter Nisus prospective immigrants would have to complete 24 mindbending puzzles...



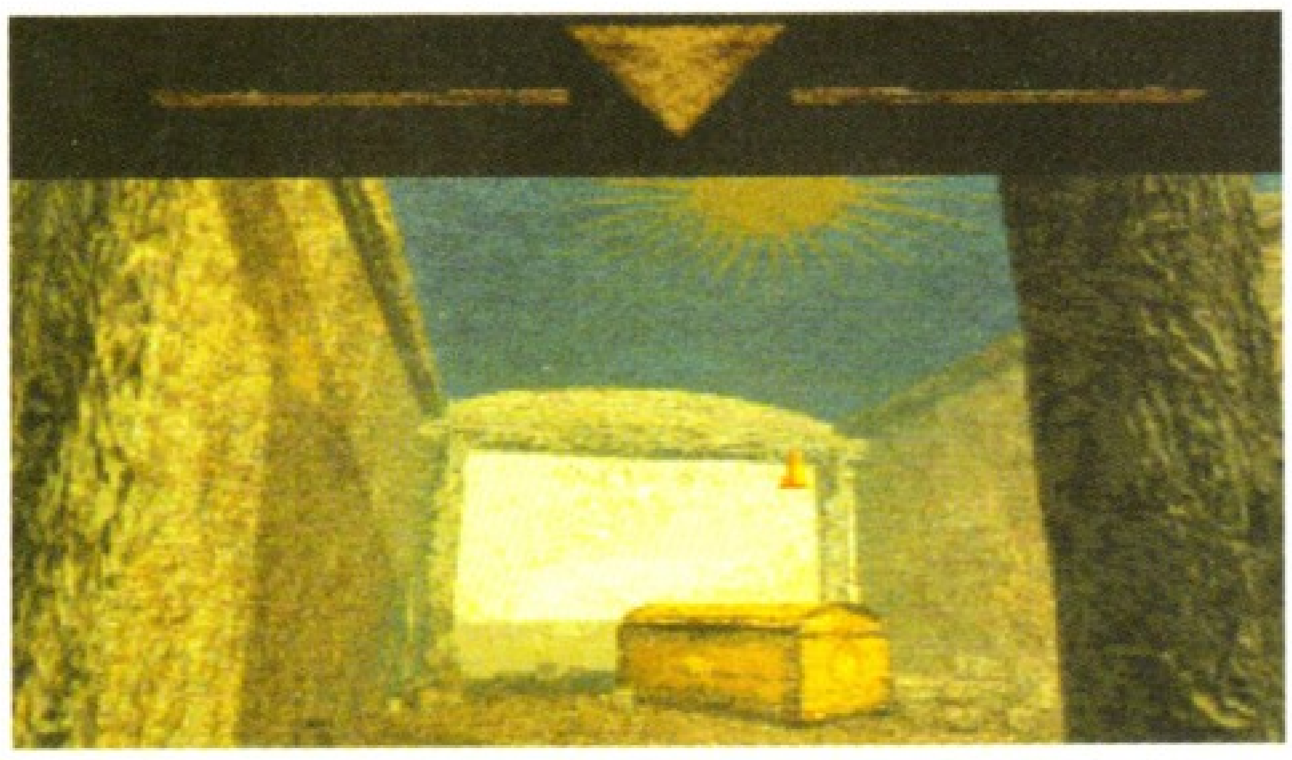
Once again, the clue is in the mysterious utterings of the Oracle. Or is it? What is all this 'Assembly of the Planners' business? What's wrong with, "Fit the shapes in the holes and keep the colours separate"? Less atmospheric I suppose.



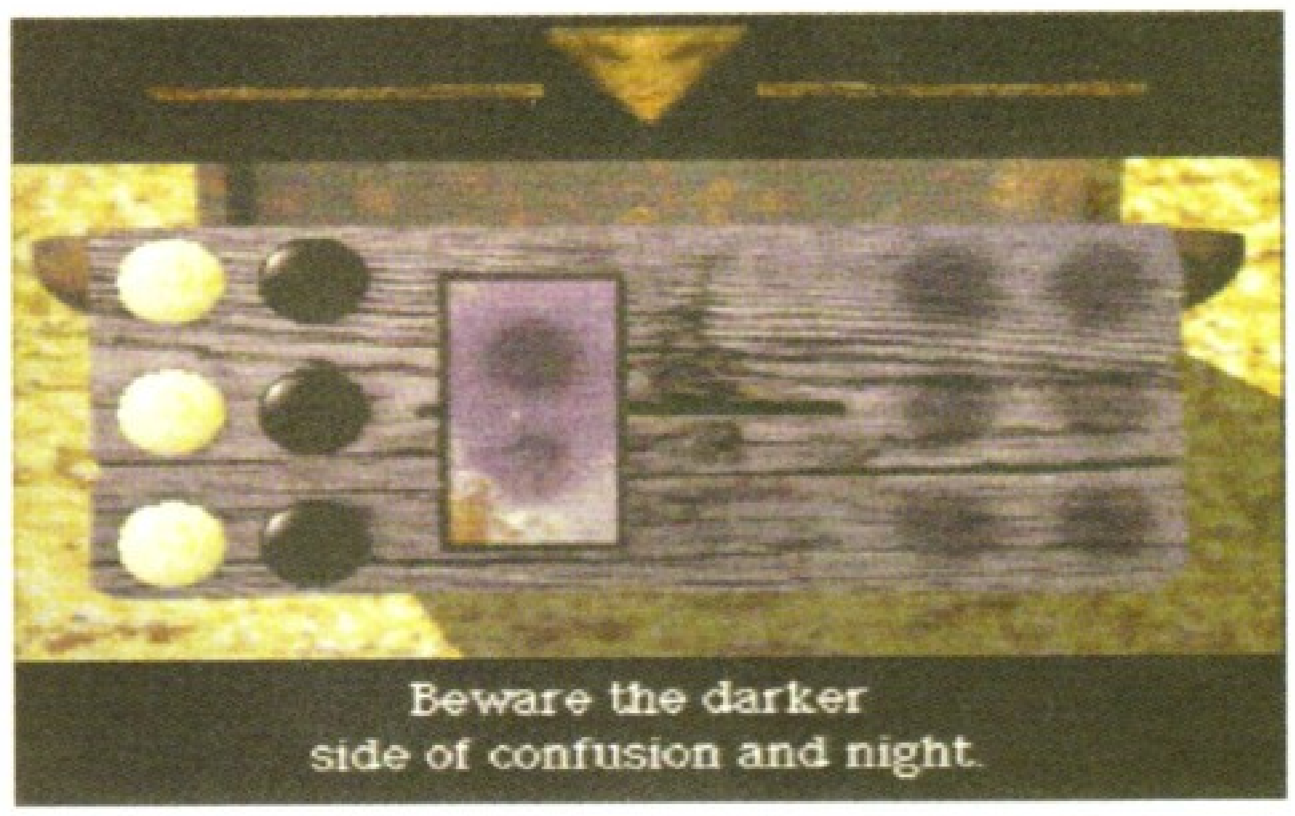
Mmm. Arrange balls on turntables. Mmm.



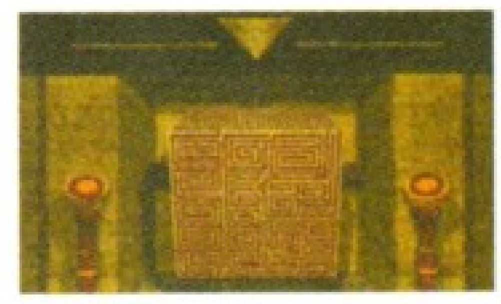
The most tedious puzzle of all is this Soko-Ban-style game, starring a slow-moving beetle.



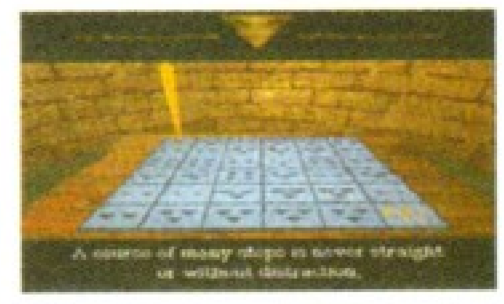
Blanket chests of the gods? Dare you gaze upon the Duvet of Osiris? Or the Pillow-Slips of Ra? Well, tough, because this is just a box with a puzzle in it.



Good advice from the Oracle. There's a lesson for us all there.



The crazy cuboid maze: looks easy – is actually super-hard.



Dividers of Doom. Measure your way around the board.

If the tasks were easy the whole game would be worthless – but you can take complexity too far.

route leads you to a stone altar on which stands a goblet containing coloured gems. Touch the goblet and the gems begin to swirl, then they disappear in a blaze of light. A lugubrious voice emanates from thin air telling you, in a roundabout way, that you have to recover the gems by solving the puzzles of the Oracle. Thence will you be allowed access to the lost treasures of Nisus.

Stepping outside, you come across a mysterious pool of water surrounded by stones. Press a stone and a symbol depicting some kind of puzzle eerily appears in the pool. If you then step into the pool you're transported to a room containing one of the 24 challenges.

Most of the puzzles are variations on familiar themes, varying from tile-swivelling to maze-solving to Soko Ban-style block-shoving, all of which have been done out in an Ancient Middle Eastern motif. Familiar though they are, they present a formidable challenge. The maze puzzle, for example, requires you to guide a marble through a vast maze that covers all six faces of a cube. A tile-spinning game in which you have to align horse pictograms suddenly becomes a new form of IQ-test torture when you realise that the tiles can be shuffled on their grid around as well as rotated.

At least you have some initial inkling of what to do with these examples, though. Others are made even more testing by their obscurity. In one room you're confronted by a table bearing a dozen objects and it transpires that you have to pair them up according to some common factor. Fortunately I had the benefit of a solution sheet to reveal the tenuous links between the objects (as well as a large dictionary to reveal what a 'quern' is), but regular punters will have to make do with the cryptic Oracular tip that appears when they click on the triangular stone at the top of the screen.

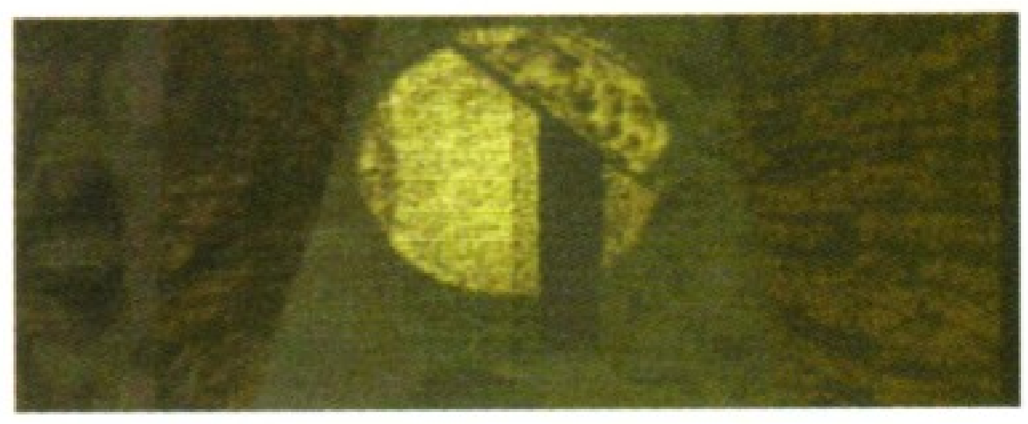
Of course, if the tasks were easy the whole game would be worthless - but you can take complexity too far. While the puzzles are perfectly suited to Mekon-headed genius rocket scientists, I suspect they may be a tad too tricky for Saturn owners who have the standard model brain installed.

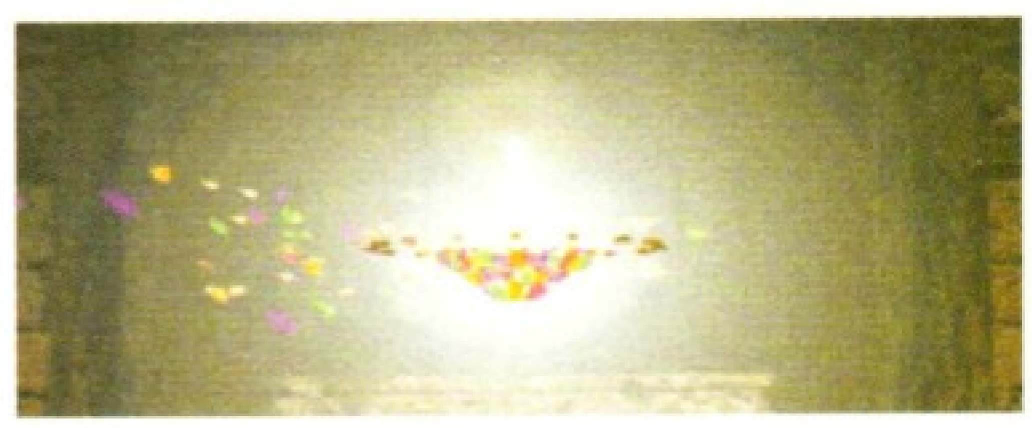
In an attempt to make Jewels of the Oracle more populist the programmers have included an easy mode which simplifies some of the puzzles, but I can't see that making a great deal of difference. It's still a game that needs the thought patterns and huge attention-span of a major league puzzle master. Lesser humanlings need not apply.

PAUL GLANCEY



Another challenge in the arcane sport of Ball-Arranging. It's rather like the Crystal Maze, this, isn't it? Kind of.







Enter the Oracle's chamber (top), break his bowl of jelly beans (middle) and take a trip through his tunnel of wonders (bottom).



Sing hurrahs, for you have recaptured one of the Oracles jewels.

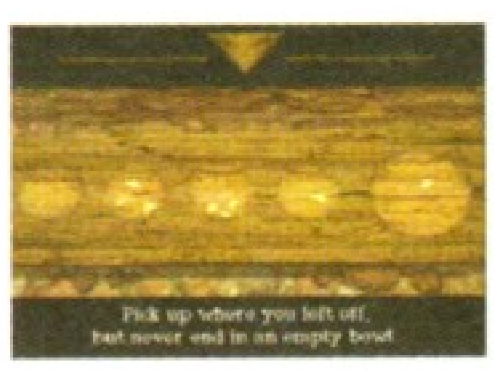


Find the links between the objects. Watch out for the 'quern'.





An intriguing rock. With an equally intriguing puzzle contained within. Fascinating. No, extremely curious in fact.



And to think they told you that GCSE in Pebble Arranging would never come in useful. How wrong they all were.

A testing puzzle game which will thrill MENSA candidates, but bore/annoy the pants of everyone else.

graphics	77
sound	70
playability	59
lastability	69
overall	60%

SEGA SATURN™ tips

To celebrate the official release of Street Fighter Alpha 2 – the greatest 2D fighting game ever – SSM brings you a massive list of cheats and secrets for it. On top of that, we've got the first cheats for two of Sega's Christmas biggies: Daytona USA CCE and Virtual On. We think you'll find them most amusing, boyfrieeeeeend...

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

Select Training Mode, and on the Character Select screen hold L Shift and Start. Now choose a character and keep the buttons held until you reach the options menu. When you start the game and initiate a Custom Combo, the shadows behind will never disappear. You'll also be able to jump, and won't always be rushing forward. This lets you practice Custom Combos for as long as you want!

Do the same as the previous cheat, only hold R Shift and Start when selecting a character and you'll have rapid-fire attacks when you begin. This means you can hold a punch and repeatedly do fireball motions to throw lots of projectiles across the screen.

If you do both cheats at once, by holding L Shift, R Shift and Start when selecting a character, you'll have rapid-fire attacks and ever-lasting Custom Combos at once! By doing this, you can get someone in the corner and hold an attack button to keep juggling them for over 99 hits!

These secret character cheats can only be entered in Arcade, Training or Survival modes – not Versus.

To access Chun-Li in her original Street Fighter 2 costume, highlight regular Chun-Li and hold Start. Now wait for 5 seconds, and pick her by pressing any button. The only other difference is that her fireball now has to be done as a charging motion rather than a half-circle forward.

To play as Evil Ryu, get to the Character Select screen and highlight regular Ryu. Now hold the Start button and move Right to Adon, then Up to Akuma, Down to Adon again, then Left back to Ryu. Now select him while still holding Start. Evil Ryu can do a Super Dragon Punch (double fireball motion and any kick), and Akuma's "Firecracker" move (LP, LP, F, LK, HP very quickly). He is also much better at juggling and linking attacks.



To access the original Street Fighter 2 version of Zangief, highlight regular Zangief and hold Start. Now move to Sagat, Sodom, Birdie, Charlie, Dhalsim, Ryu, Adon, Guy, Ken, then Zangief again. Now select him while still holding Start. Original Zangief doesn't have a super bar and can only before the two original special moves – the Spinning Piledriver and the Spinning Lariat. His range is much better than the regular version.

To access the original Street Fighter 2 version of Dhalsim, highlight regular Dhalsim and hold Start. Now move to Zangief, Sagat, Charlie, then Dhalsim again. Now select him while still holding Start. Original Dhalsim hasn't got a super bar and can only do a Yoga Flame, Yoga Fire and Yoga Spear.

To play as Super Akuma (also known as Shin-Gouki), highlight regular Akuma. Now hold Start and press Down, Down, Right, Down, Right, Down, Down, Down, Left, Down, Left, Down, then select him with any button. Super Akuma can throw double air fireballs, has extra-fast teleports and "firecracker", and is by far the best character available. We recommend you don't play as him too much, as he makes the game too easy.

All of these characters can be played in Versus mode by entering them in one of the other modes, then playing Versus. On the Vs Character Select screen, highlight someone and hold Start to make their name change colour. Now chose them to get the new version.

For 6 new Sakura colours in Survival Mode only, highlight regular Sakura, hold Start and press Up, Left, Down, Left, Down, Right, Right, Down, Left, Left, Down, Down, Down, Right, Up, Up, Right. You'll be on Ryu. Select him with any button while still holding Start for one of 6 new colours. For player 2 you must do the same as with player 1, but press Up, Left, Down, Left, Down, Right, Down, Left, Left, Up, Right, Right, Up, Left, Up, Right, Right instead.



Here's Chun-Li in her original costume!



Boom! Evil Ryu's three-level "Firecracker!"



Original Dhalsim's got no super combo bar.



Original Zangief has a massive reach!


Sakura's lovely new pink school uniform.



The secret colours are only for Survival.

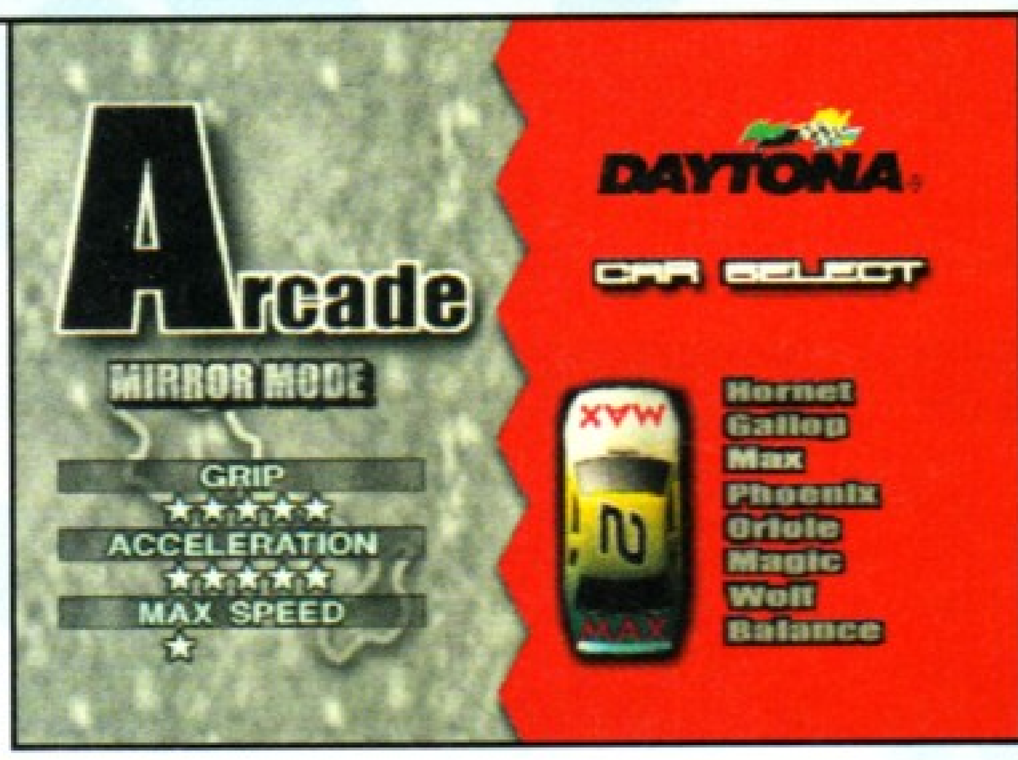

That new brown outfit's not very nice.



Super Akuma's double air fireballs!

DAYTONA CCE

Thanks very much to Clifford Bonney from Oxford for sending these secrets in first.





To get a hidden mirror mode, you must first finish all of the tracks on Hard difficulty. Then go to the track selection screen and hold X+Y+Z and press A or C to flip the track. When you race now, the everything will be reversed, so that all right hand bends have become left hand bends, etc.

To get the original Daytona Hornet car, finish all of the tracks on Medium difficulty in first place. The new car is brilliant in every area.

To get the first horse (called Uma) you must come in first place on the first two tracks, on Hard difficulty in an Endurance Mode race. The horse loses no speed at all on the grass.

To get the second horse (called Uma 2, funnily enough), you must come in first place on all tracks playing as the first horse (Uma). All of the options should be on their default settings for this.



Here's Mirror Mode working to full effect...



... And here also on the expert level too.

VIRTUAL ON

While playing Virtual On, you can get different camera angles by pressing X+Y+Z at the same time. The view will instantly switch to an overhead view, then to a side view when pressed again. Press them together once more to get back to the original behind-the-character view.

To get all of the characters in their alternate costumes, go to the mode select screen and select whatever you want to play by pressing and holding the L Shift button. Now everyone will be in their second colours to be picked.

An extra white version of Temjin and Raiden can be accessed by going to the title screen and holding Up, then pressing L Shift and R Shift at the same time. You'll hear a noise to let you know it's worked, and both characters will be in new costumes.

To play as the penalty boss, Jaguarandi, finish the game as any character on Hard level and you'll then be able to play as him in Arcade and Versus modes by moving to the right of Raiden on the Character Select screen.

An easier way of playing as Jaguarandi is to go to the title screen and hold Down, then press both L Shift and R Shift at the same time. You'll hear a noise if it has worked, and he'll be selectable by moving off to the right of Raiden on the Character Select screen.



If you're not keen on pink, play as Fei-Yen in blue.



Jaguarandi grows from the floor when you pick him!



Jagaurandi has got enormous weapons!



By pressing X+Y+Z at the same time, you can switch the view to this.



Pressing X+Y+Z again changes it to a side-on angle. It's a bit tricky...



Use the cheats here to put Raiden in this hidden yellow/white outfit.

ALIEN TRILOGY



These excellent cheat modes are accessed by entering these codes as passwords on the standard password entry screen. As you'll notice, some of the letters are replaced with numbers to make up for the fact that the password screen doesn't have the entire alphabet. Once you've entered a code, a message will appear to let you know that the cheat has worked.

For a level select, enter the code "FLYTo??", but replace the "??" with the level number that you want to warp to. Exit the password screen and begin a new game.

To make yourself invincible, enter the code "FVNKYG1BBoN". Now start the game and you'll take no damage.

To get all of the weapons from the start of the game, enter the code "F1SH1NGFoRGVNS". As you can guess, you'll start with all the weapons.

To give yourself maximum ammunition, enter the code "F1LLMYPoCK1TS". Again, it's pretty obvious what that will give you.



"Cheats Activated" shows you did it right.



Getting hit does no damage when cheating!

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 2

Just a tiny little tip you may not have noticed. When playing in Homerun Derby mode, you can get different camera angles simply by pressing the R Shift button whenever the ball is in the air. That's it.

COIN-OPERATED

This year once again saw the greatest in arcade shows, with the 34th Amusement Machine Show (JAMMA). At the Makuhari Messe, outside Tokyo, the world's gaming elite gathered to display their latest coin-ops to the world.

If what you've been used to seems like the limit of gaming achievement, prepare to be blasted away by the real power of the arcade: Every major arcade manufacturer has embarked on a battle for arcade supremacy by secretly developing it's own state-of-the-art high-technology hardware! The full force of JAMMA '96 is the like of which you have never seen before! With power to torch all home systems to ashes these games aren't likely for conversion any time soon. So standby for action as the super-game systems of the future battle for the accolade of Ultimate Next Generation Game! Let's look at the competition:

SEGA
Hardware: Model 3
Games: Virtua Fighter 3, Supercar

Still the best game around in the form of VF3. The final version in all its magnificence was certainly the focal point of the show – a clear demonstration of the future of arcade gaming.

KONAMI
Hardware: Cobra
Games: GTI Club, PF573 Project

As well as the brilliant GTI Club, Konami had a pre-demo version of a 3D fighting game, with graphical power at least equal to Sega's Model 3 board.

CAPCOM
Hardware: CP-SYSTEM 3
Games: Red-Earth, Street Fighter 3

Proving sprite technology can advance just as much as 3D polygons, Capcom finally showed the future of fighting games with the amazing Red-Earth.

TAITO
Hardware: TOP-SECRET
Games: G-Darius

Taito were also showing a demo of their first game to unleash the power of their new board. The next in the series of the incredible Darius series is now in 3D!

SNK
Hardware: TOP-SECRET
Games: TOP-SECRET

Imagine how some of SNK's best fighting games of all time would look if they had even more power to run them! Well SNK's new board is coming soon!

NAMCO
Hardware: TOP-SECRET
Games: Tekken 3?

To everyone's surprise Tekken 3 wasn't unveiled at the show, so we can't reveal much but we'll all betting that Tekken 3 will be the first game on it! This is rumoured to be running on Namco's equivalent to the Model 3 board.

CAPCOM

RED EARTH

JAMMA proved to be the first real opportunity to savour a near complete version of Red Earth – the Western version of War-Zard which we featured in issue #179. Significant because it is Capcom's first title powered by the new CP-System III technology, we now have a better idea of the plot details, and all-important play mechanics. This game is still unfinished, so there may still be changes. However it is shaping up to be MONSTER exciting! A full report coming soon, but suffice to say that this game has the power and the concept to redefine sprite-based fighting games!







X-MEN VS STREET-FIGHTER

You only have to look at the name to know this game offers more action than you ever thought possible! Boasting superlative game play and graphics that must be pushing CP-System II to the limit, X-Men vs Street Fighter became one of the most popular games of the show – you really had to wait a long time to get a game. Most people agreed that CAPCOM had got the balance right between the mutant X-Men and the more human Street Fighters. Graphically, everyone was stunned that they'd been able to squeeze a game as great as this out of the CP-System II.



STREET FIGHTER EX

Also on display at Capcom's stand was the much anticipated 3D polygon variation on the Street Fighter theme. This game is being developed by a team called Arika, whose interview we printed in the last issue. First impressions were slightly unsure because graphically it's still quite basic compared to other 3D games available. However, all those who played it agreed that the gameplay was something quite special and indeed seeing your favourite 2D Street Fighter characters fighting in 3D is an amazing experience!

The control method remains faithful to the SF series: eight-direction joystick, plus six buttons. As you can see from the profiles, all the popular moves have been retained and – from what we can tell – are performed exactly the same as before. There are, however, some intriguing original features. Bear in mind that members of the Arika team created Street Fighter 2. So what's okay with them is fine with us! While no details are available on the kind of hardware being used to support the game, the results are nonetheless spectacular. It is genuinely exciting to see Street Fighter favourites Ryu, Ken, Chun Li, and Zangief presented in this new way.

Since the last issue we can confirm that two new characters have entered the mix - one of them is Guile making his long-awaited return to SF. The other is an all-new character.





SEGA ENTERPRISES

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

Although there were obviously several long rows of these units set up at the Sega area they also had the units scattered around the entire hall so as you walked around you just kept bumping in VF3! There were long crowds around the main projector showing the opening movie.







SEGA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Choose your favourite car from the four full production cars available and race them on original circuits with "new dynamic realism"! The new specially arranged BGM music "Dead Heat" was composed by AVEX TRAX (one of the coolest dance music labels in Japan at the moment) with a variety of other characteristic club musicians. All the engine sounds are faithfully reproduced with state-of-the-art sampling from real cars.





SUPER GIANT SLALOM

This game from Sega came as a complete surprise and everybody was amazed at how good Sega's first attempt was. Obviously competing with Namco's Alpine Racer 2 there are many similarities however until we have further details the jury will have to wait.

WAVE RUNNER

Working with Yamaha, Sega have developed a super realistic jetski game. They wanted to get it perfect so they choose the standard riding version (as opposed to Namco's standing version). Due to their close cooperation with Yamaha the feedback of wave bounces and landing in the water after going over a ramp is really powerful. You really feel like you're on the ocean.



KONAMI

GTI CLUB



Konami's new race game is set in a beautiful resort area located in the South of France. Eight rally cars compete in each race with up to four of them controllable by the players, with the others driven by the CPU. There are several unique game features: Side Break Quick Turn – a technical rally term referring to a manoeuvre used with these small FF (Front Engine, Front Drive) sports cars. The use of which gives GTI Club a new kind of driving feel. A 'Free Course Map' refers to where, at each and every city street cross-







There were always massive crowds around this game. Even those not playing could enjoy the game as it's so open and free that the players always seem to take totally unexpected routes. Certainly, the big hit of the show!

roads, you can freely choose any course across them. Weaving between the other vehicles, cutting across the traffic (one picture sees you cutting up a huge bus), you can even go the wrong way down the road! Basically you have total freedom! GTI Club appears to have redefined the car racing game for years to come!

SOLAR ASSAULT GRADIUS

For all of Konami's fans who've been dreaming about the latest version of the Gradius Series, the wait is over. We're unable to go into great detail at the moment but in general the game is a behind view 3D shooting game. The scale is big with huge 3D objects being moved around the screen. There's a power-up gauge and collectable capsules to power it up. Along with the ever popular "Vic Viper" (armed with missile and laser) is the equally famous "Lord British" (armed with spread bomb and cyclone laser).

TAITO





PUZZLE BOBBLE 3

Puzzle Bobble is back! Choose from eight unique characters and battle against a friend or the computer over a massive range of bubble layout variations (30 stages/560 rounds)! There are several exciting and fantastic new features: New Technique: Deflect from the ceiling as well as the sides New Item: the Rainbow Bubble – burst a bubble next to the Rainbow Bubble and it changes to the colour of the burst bubble. New Feature: Puzzle Mode, where some kind of bubble puzzle slowly advances down the screen. Brilliant!

FIGHTERS' IMPACT

The game play in Fighter's Impact is pretty straightforward. There's one lever and three buttons – Shift, Punch and Kick – but Taito added a whole range of special features to make it rather unique: 1. Latest motion capture technology for added realism. 2. All eight characters have three choices of fighting style (except Yukiwo who has only one) 3: Build your own original combo, where certain attacks in the right sequence creates an amazing combo! 4. The Shift button allows for a number of special evasive manoeuvres with the lever. Worth investigating.

SIDE BY SIDE

A race game in which TAITO go for realism – not just in handling, but looks as well. All eight cars in SIDE BY SIDE are based on marketed cars, two cars from each of four manufacturers - Toyota, Nissan, Honda and Mazda. The performance of each car reflects that of the real car so some are quicker than others, depending on the course you choose. Each course represents one of the four seasons: SPRING – a high speed course suitable for beginners, in which cherry blossoms lining the road. SUMMER – a slightly more challenging course perfect for intermediate drivers, set next to the seashore. AUTUMN – you'll need to have mastered professional skidding to handle the narrow roads and a series of tricky corners which characterise this leafy forest. WINTER – for super-experts, requiring a whole range of new driving skills in the snow. The four-player option is great fun too, adding to the enjoyment.



SNK

Proving once again that they have plenty of good ideas up their sleeves SNK had a number of attractions at their booth. The MFX2000 is a simulator ride seating six people with a huge 72-inch screen – a great experience! SNK also had a curious game which involves you moving a metal bar around a course. All the edges to the course are electrified, so if you touch the side a buzzer rings, sparks fly and smoke bellows out. Finally, SNK's new cabinet design now contains a video camera and TV screen! It's connected directly to your opponents cabinet so that you can see each other while you're playing. Great fun when you're with a friend because you l pull stupid faces when you beat them! Also on show was their football game, Ultimate 11.

SAMURAI SHODOWN IV

Not much info on this yet as it's still under development. It's the next sequel to the hugely popular Samurai Shodown series. This time there are 12 characters from Samurai Shodown 3, another three characters from even older versions of Samurai Shodown, and two completely new characters making a total of 17 player characters! Both the effectiveness of the weapon and level setting are selectable so both beginners and experts can enjoy playing it.

TECMO

DEAD OR ALIVE

At the show it still wasn't quite finished as Tecmo were still in the final stages of fine tuning, however, at the Tecmo Game Live show (see main news section) they unveiled the final version. Japanese dedicated Arcade magazine Gamest has been avidly following this fighting game for the past few months, so expect the final result to be awesome. Tecmo also unveiled their 3D horse-riding game, Gallop Racer.








KIZUNA ENCOUNTER: SUPER TAG BATTLE

Sequel to last year's Kizuna Encounter, this time with an all new game system: One player can choose two characters (the tag system). On a normal MVS only one player can control at a time, but on the Special MVS version you can have 1P+1P VS 2P+2P and 2 players only have to put in one credit! Some of the other combinations are 1P+1P VS 2P, 1P+1P VS COM etc. The control system uses one lever and 4 buttons: Punch, Kick, Weapon, and Tag. Tagging is fairly simple: So long as you are in your tag area then when both characters touch they can tag to change places. Where there are two players in team the waiting character isn't left idle. While tapping on the button he can increase his health by restoring your life gauge. However, the more times you tag the effectiveness becomes less and less. There is also an emergency tag, operated by the waiting character if three conditions are met: 1. Your partner's bar is almost empty 2. your opponent's bar is over half full, and 3. your partner is in your tag zone. Needless to say Super Tag Battle is packed full of special combat moves and techniques such as Sway, Guard Cancel and Rushing Combos etcetera. Probably the best 'tag' game available at this time.







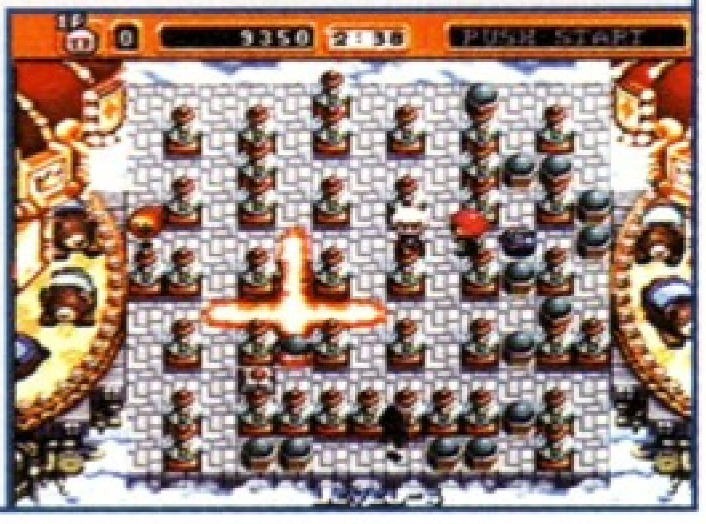
HUDSON

NEO BOMBERMAN

At last he's back in the arcade! There are two modes. In the Normal Mode everything you could imagine from the Saturn version is there, but the scale is much bigger with even more in-depth game play. There are ten types of vehicles which are spawned from defeated enemies. Also, if you rescue your companions who are trapped in a cell, they can fight along side you. When all have been helped to safety you win! This time all the enemies have artificial intelligence to refine and improve their fighting strategies depending on your tactics and skill. This is done to make your life more difficult as their increasing smartness will be a source of great annoyance. In total there are 5 stages to be completed. All your favourite characters are here with their real voices straight from the Japanese TV commercials!







JALECO

SECOND EARTH GRATIA

Proving that there's still life in this genre of olden days Jaleco are fighting back with their latest offering, Second Earth Gratia! With incredible ships and background design they've generated a brilliant 3D effect to the game. By utilising the latest high quality 3D graphics technology they've tilted the typical horizontal scrolling game so that it's got true depth and perspective! This makes playing the game a lot easier and much more fun – judging angles, distances, and the size of objects is much more intuitive, so your shooting is much more precise. However, to make up for this, all the enemies are harder so it's still a challenging game.





OUT NOW

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

BY CAPCOM, PRICE £44.99, RATING 95%

Let there be no doubt about the genius gameplay that Capcom have installed in Street Fighter Alpha 2. Everything about this classic game screams quality. For a start, the renowned fighting game masters have actually managed to better the brilliance of the



original SFA with a far larger character roster and numerous gameplay enhancements designed to make this the ultimate combat title. The new Custom Combo and enhanced Alpha counter features add to the already brilliant Street Fighter Alpha engine. Truly this is the most technically accomplished and supremely playable fighting game out there.



The new characters are ace too: Dhalsim and Zangief finally arrive in the Alpha series, plus the Final Fight connection continues with the inclusion of Rolento. From Street Fighter 1 we have the amazing Gen and those after an all-new creation can revel in the wanton violence of schoolgirl Sakura! Plus, with better graphics, faster loading, more animation and loads more hidden characters, Street Fighter Alpha 2 on Saturn is far superior to the decent enough PlayStation version also available this month.

VIRTUA COP 2

BY SEGA/AM2, PRICE £49.99, RATING 95%

The incredible quality of Sega Saturn AM2 titles is becoming a bit of a cliche these days. As you might imagine, I'm about to be heaping



superlative on superlative as I tell you why Virtua Cop 2 is worthy of purchase.

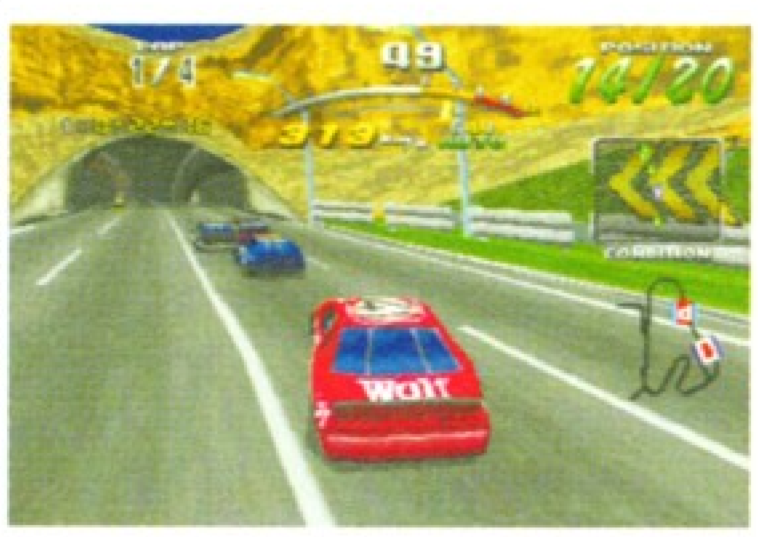
For a start, it's a stunningly close conversion. It might not be quite as close as the original (which was a far less ambitious coin-op) but when compared to Cop 1 it is packed with far more detail and hodloads' more variety. The choice of route through the latter half of the first two levels has been retained, plus AM2 have added in an alternative route on the final stage - something exclusive to Saturn, since it wasn't in the arcade original.

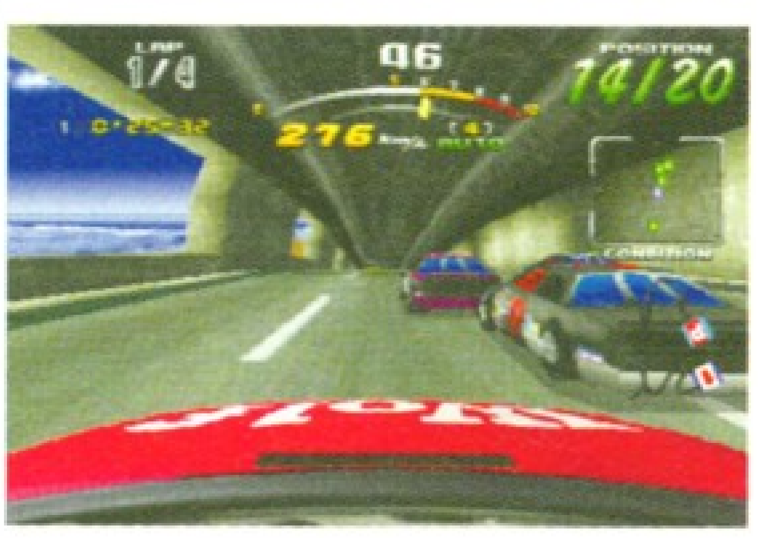
So, it would appear that this is something of a "hats off to AM2" scenario for handing in what is undoubtedly an awesome game. PAL owners can buy in confidence too: AM2 have done us proud with a full-screen, full-speed display making this just as good as the Japanese original. This only misses out on the Game of the Month accolade due to the competitive spirit of SFA2, yet still demands purchase!

DAYTONA CCE

BY SEGA, PRICE £44.99, RATING 90%

This game is still a subject of hot debate in the EMAP offices. As we said last





month, this is NOT Daytona Remix. The CS Team (responsible for Sega Rally) have opted not to reconvert the coin-op as we suspect most people would have liked them to do. Instead they have produced their own spin on the incredible AM2 classic.

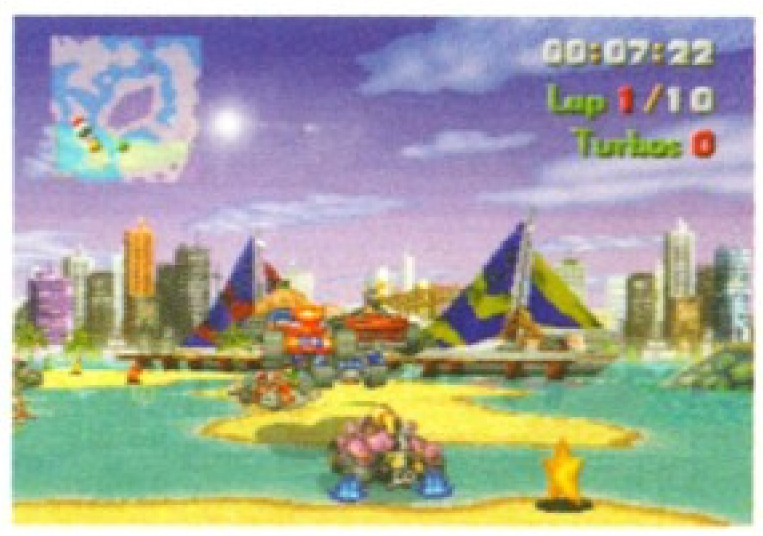
In some ways, the game is a great success. Overall, the graphics do look far, far better with a full-screen, full-speed PAL display

STREET RACER

BY UBISOFT, PRICE £44.99 RATING 82%



One of the greatest games of all-time is Super Mario Kart. There, I've said it. I don't care if I am editor of the official Saturn magazine. No-one, but no-one can deny the power of Mario Kart. And since that classic is never going to appear on Saturn we should be thankful for any title which attempts to emulate it. Which is Street Racer, basically. Taking elements of Street Fighter and mixing in copious amounts of Mario Kart



should result in a triumph of a game. As it is, Street Racer isn't bad at all.

From a technical standpoint, it's excellent. It's the first polygonal 3D racer to run at arcade speeds (60 frames a second), and features EIGHT-PLAYER simultaneous play.

It's all pretty cool actually, with only a series of minor problems stopping this from getting a very high rating. Foremost amongst the quibbles is the fact that you seem to be controlling the road as opposed to the kart, which does put you off. In these types of game it's playability that's all-important and technical issues aside, games like Sega Rally and Daytona are still streets ahead. Still, if Vivid Image were to use this technology on a more realistic racer, we could be in for something awesome...

HARDCORE 4x4

BY GREMLIN, PRICE £44.99, RATING 76%

The battle of the road racers is hotting up this Christmas. Indeed, three of them are featured in this Out Now section



alone. Unfortunately, Gremlin's off-roading effort is probably the worst of the three.

There's little to fault the graphics - as you can see from the shots, the contoured landscapes and texture-mapping are rather fine. It's just a shame that the frame rate is so jerky as opposed to Daytona CCE and especially Street Racer.

This leads into the fundamental problem with the game. Speed. Now off-roading isn't the most velocity-packed racing sport, granted. But it is kind of essential for a driving videogame, and as such Hardcore 4x4 is just a bit lacking in the excitement department.

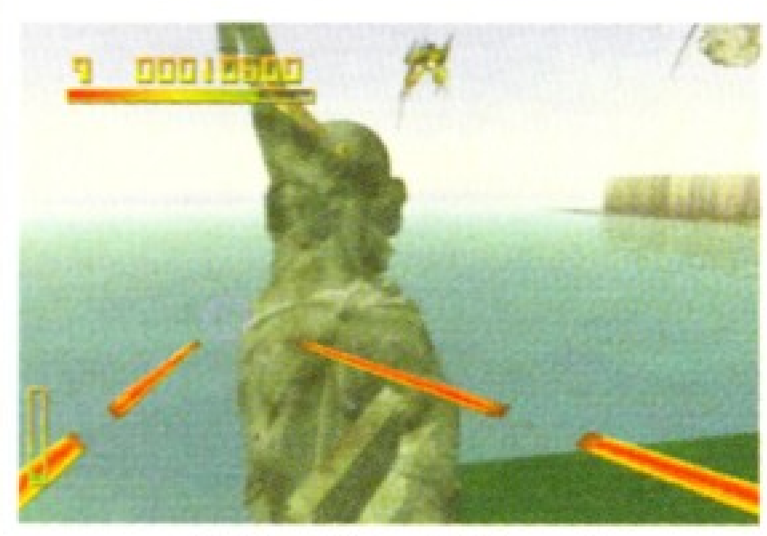
With a smoother frame rate, higher speed or more exciting terrain this could have been ace. As it is, Hardcore 4x4 falls distinctly into the "not bad, but certainly not essential" category.

CHAOS CONTROL

BY INFOGRAMES, PRICE £39.99, RATING 56%

The last couple of months have certainly seen an upsurge in the amount of software using the old Virtua Gun after months and months of Virtua Cop being the only compatible software. Chaos Control was the first "other" game to use it and it's out now. However, don't buy it. Please.

For a start rather than using excellent 3D for the main visuals, Chaos Control uses full-motion video with overlaid sprites. This gives the



game a distinct "could have been done on Mega-CD" quality and although the FMV is obviously better, the lack of interactivity is still omnipresent. As Rob so deftly put it when reviewing this game last month: "You might be desperate for

games that utilise your Virtua Gun but Chaos Control is one travesty that will have you pointing your gun at yourself for being fool enough to buy it". Amen to that.

CRIMEWAVE
BY EIDOS, PRICE £39.99, RATING 73%

After the triumph of Tomb Raider, Eidos unleash their Saturn-exclusive game CrimeWave upon us. And it's not too bad, essentially. First of all, the game is actually quite original - the 3D is used to present a kind of freeform isometric perspective which changes with the action. Quite impressive. The basic objective has you driving through the streets, chasing down villains in their cars and gunning them down. Competition comes in the form of rival vigilantes, plus you have to be careful not to harm the innocent civilians.

On paper this all sounds pretty cool. Unfortunately, CrimeWave isn't totally without its faults. The action essentially boils to chase-car-kill-it-find-another-kill-that-one and so on. Pretty repetitive stuff actually. The control method can also lead to some frustration. And the scrolling's perhaps a bit too jerky too.



CrimeWave is worth a look, but don't expect anything too earth-shattering.

BLAZING DRAGONS
BY BMG, PRICE £39.99, RATING 23%

As you can see from the rating, Blazing Dragons is probably the worst game officially available on the Saturn. Certainly, by looking at the scores to the right, you would believe it.



Blazing Dragons is best described as a kind of adventure RPG thing with cartoon style graphics. It falls flat on its face in that the control interface is sub-Secret of Monkey Island, the puzzles are more a case of holding the right object at the right time (as opposed to logically thought out solutions) and the amount of times you character tells you, "I can't do that here" drives you up the wall.

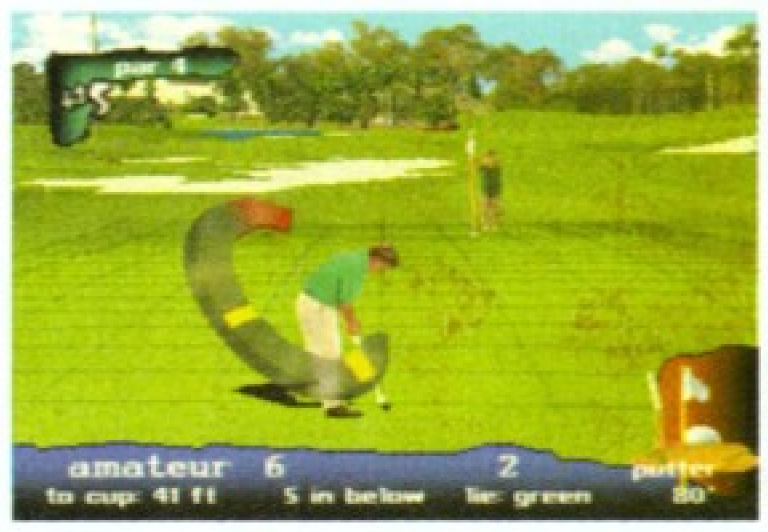
A carefully thought out plot and entertaining script would improve matters, but Blazing Dragons lacks either. In fact, it's one of these cases where they've tried so hard to be funny but instead have created what is more irritating than amusing.

Please avoid this, it's just not worth adding to your collection under any circumstances.

PGA TOUR GOLF
BY EA, PRICE £TBA, RATING 68%

You could argue that the success of the Megadrive over the Super NES was down to the quality of its sports simulations as much as the clever marketing of yore. Electronic Arts did Sega owners proud with awesome hockey, American Football and golf games. In particular, the latter, PGA Tour Golf was ace in every one of its myriad incarnations.

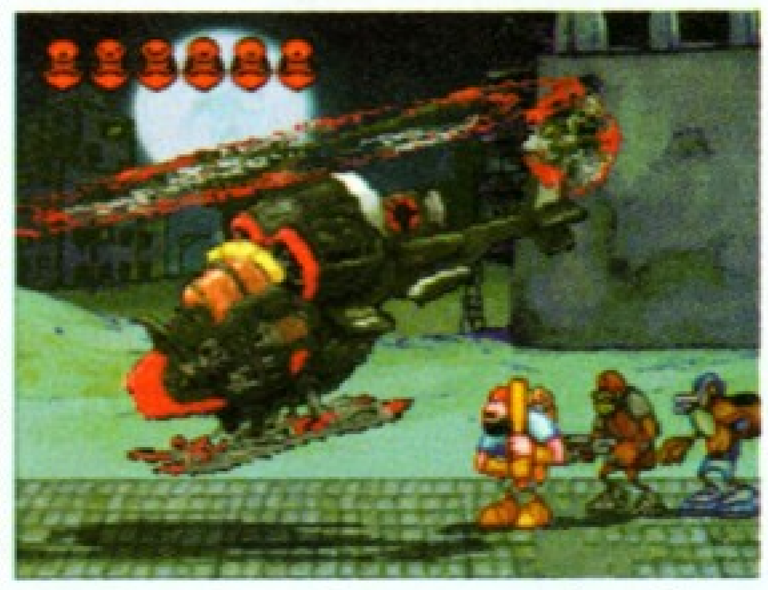
As such it particularly pains me to see that EA have handed in what is a most unremarkable 32-bit translation of what is their most celebrated of golfing titles. The graphics are flat and unconvincing, but most of all, EA have thrown away the amazing gameplay that made the Megadrive original(s) a must-have title on that system. Certainly, I'd prefer playing PGA Tour Golf 3 on Megadrive than this. As it is, I don't have to, because Gremlin have produced the rather fine Actua Golf for the Saturn, so I'll have that instead. And so should you.



3 DIRTY DWARVES
BY SEGA, PRICE £39.99, RATING 65%

SegaSoft's first foray into the world of Saturn software finally arrives and... it's a bit crap actually. Three Dirty Dwarves isn't some kind of particularly sordid porn vid - instead it's a sideways scrolling platform fighting game thingy. Kind of like Guardian Heroes, only not as deep or entertaining.

The screenshots tell a sad, mournful story of underwhelming graphics, but what you can't really "appreciate" is the monotony of the gameplay. Three Dirty Dwarves really is boring - presenting a near-constant procession of tiresome meanies to beat up. True enough, the feature of switching dwarves (and thus weaponry) is quite an innovative idea, but in no way does it make for the rest of the game, which just isn't worth the bother.



ALSO OUT NOW

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ALONE IN THE DARK 2:JACK'S BACK	£39.99	52%
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VIRTUA FIGHTER	**£49.99**	**91%**
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VIRTUA FIGHTER REMIX	**£29.99**	**91%**
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WORLD SERIES BASEBALL	£39.99	81%
WORLDWIDE SOCCER	**£44.99**	**94%**
WORMS	£49.99	83%
WWF WRESTLEMANIA	£39.99	80%
X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM	**£49.99**	**92%**

Introducing...

SUPERCAR





AM2 have finally revealed their second Model 3 project for the arcades... and it's the official coin-op sequel to the classic Daytona USA! Currently entitled "SuperCar" (although this might change), this amazing looking game looks like being the most stunning driving game ever seen anywhere!

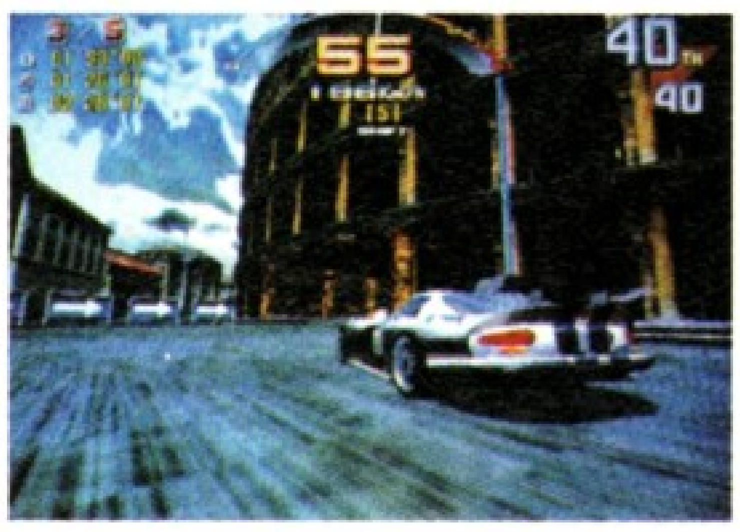
As far as we can tell, the gameplay looks like being quite similar to the classic Daytona. The readouts and score panels are nigh-on identical (just rendered in a superior fashion). However, it has been revealed that key members of the SuperCar development team have spent time racing the real-life equivalents of the machines in the game, including Ferrari F50s! You can be guaranteed that the handling of the game will be just as clever and as realistic as Daytona USA and Virtua Racing were in their day.

Readers of the old SEGA MAGAZINE might find one or two aspects of SuperCar familiar. Before coding VF2 for the Saturn, AM2 released a full-motion video demo showing Jacky racing through a coliseum that exploded into its component polygons as he raced through it. Well, both the vehicle and the coliseum have made it into SuperCar virtually unchanged. The demo was produced over 18 months ago, which just goes to show how long AM2 have been planning the this Daytona sequel!

There's little more we can add to what the screenshots show, mainly because AM2 have released very little in the way of detail. They want the pictures to speak for themselves before the press can get their clammy hands on the game proper. We think that the aforementioned pictures do the job quite well, yes?

You can rest assured that SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE is getting the bottom of all of this SuperCar business and you can expect a full report on the progress of this state-of-the-art videogame in the near future - hopefully the next issue, if all goes well!







The power of Model 3 provides the most amazing arcade driving experience ever. Let there be no doubt about the power of Sega's new arcade technology. We can only assume that since AM2 are the masters behind this new epic, the game will play just as good as it looks. If not more so. We'll have more details as soon as they're released.

Model 3 creates the most phenomenal racing game ever devised - superseding the incredible Daytona USA and Sega Rally Championship. If this is how far Daytona has progressed thanks to the new technology, you can only wonder for example just how cool Virtua Cop 3 will be! AM2 and Model 3 rule the arcades!



Dear Newsagent,
In my view, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE is the greatest monthly publication in the world and I want you - yes YOU - to put it aside for me on a monthly basis, in case they're all stolen. Or bought. Or abducted by aliens or something.

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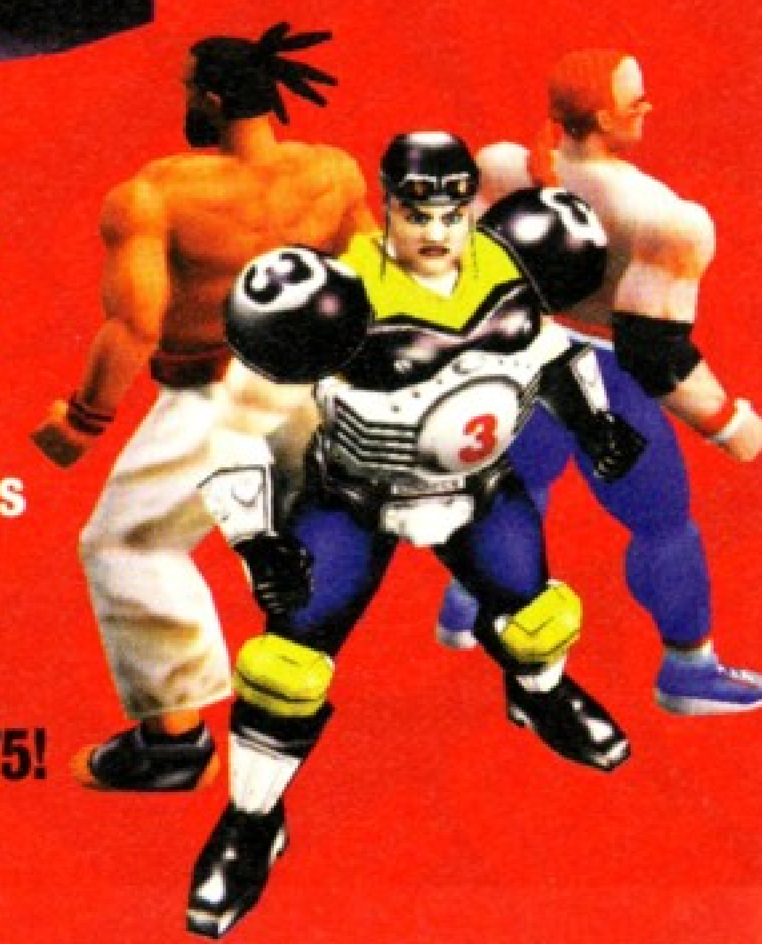
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NEXT MONTH...

Interviewed: AM Annex - creators of Sega Touring Car Championship. Tempest 2000! Sonic 3D! Dark Savior! The GREATEST Fighters MegaMix coverage of any magazine EVER! Plus: A-Z of Tips - a gargantuan cheats special! Extra: a whole lot more too, which we can't reveal at this time. But it will be ace.

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